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DUCTOR DUBITANTUM,

OR

THE RULE OF CONSCIENCE.

TO

THE MOST SACRED MAJESTY

CHARLES II.

KING OF GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND IRELAND, DEFENDER
OF THE FAITH, &c.

GREAT SIR,

THE circles of Divine Providence turn themselves upon the affairs of the world so, that every spondyl of the wheels may mark out those virtues, which we are then to exercise; and every new event in the economy of God is God's finger to point out to us by what instances he will be served. We have been sorely smitten and for a long time; for (that I may use the words of the Prophet), " Alas, for that day was great, so that none was like to it, it was even the time of Jacob's trouble^a;" and then, faith and patience, and all the passive graces of religion, were in their own season. But since God hath left off to smite us with an iron rod, and hath once more said unto these nations " They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king whom I have raised up unto them;" now our duty stands on the sunny side; it is our work to rejoice in God and in God's Anointed,

^a Jer. xxx. 7.

and to be glad, and worthily to accept of our prosperity is all our business: for so good a God we serve, that he hath made it our duty to be happy, and we cannot please him unless we be infinitely pleased ourselves. It was impossible to live without our king; but as slaves live, that is, such who are civilly dead, and persons condemned to metals; we lived to the lusts and insolency of others, but not at all to ourselves, to our own civil or religious comforts. But now our joys are mere and unmixed; for that we may do our duty and have our reward at once, God hath sent your Majesty amongst us, that we may feel the pleasures of obedience, and reap the fruits of that government which God loves and uses, which he hath constituted and adorned, which he hath restored to us by a conjugation of miracles, by the work of his hand and the light of his countenance, by changing the hearts of men, and ‘scattering the people that delight in war,’ by infatuating their counsels and breaking their cords asunder; that is, which he himself hath wrought amongst us by himself alone, and therefore will bless and will never interrupt: only we must be careful never to provoke him any more by our unthankfulness and infidel apostasy.

But now, great Sir, be pleased to give me leave in the throngs of those that rejoice to see the goodness of God to his servant Job, in imitation of them who presented him with, every man, an ear-ring of

gold, and a piece of silver^b, or a lamb, to bring also my offering, the signification of my joy. For though it be but two books; which, like the widow's two mites, make up but a contemptible sum; yet because it is all I have, your Majesty may be pleased to accept: and so much the rather, because it is also an expression of that part of the duty of my calling which hath fallen to my share. For your Majesty, like the king in the Gospel, hath been in a far country, and some of your citizens sent after you, and said, "Nolumus hunc regnare^c;" but God hath caused you to return and reign: and if your Majesty should by that example call us to render an account of our talents, I can only say, that amongst those many excellent persons who have greatly improved theirs, I was willing to negotiate and to labour. What fruit will from hence accrue to souls is wholly in the hands of God: but this semination and culture were much wanted in the reformed churches. For though in all things else the goodness of God hath made us to abound, and our cup to run over; yet our labours have been hitherto unemployed in the description of the rules of conscience and casuistical theology. In which because I have made some attempt, if the production be not unworthy, I am sure it is not improper to lay it at the feet of your Majesty. For your Majesty being by God appointed "custos utriusque

^c Luke, xx. 14.

tabulæ," since, like Moses, you are from God descended to us with the two tables of the law in your hand, and that you will best govern by the arguments and compulsory of conscience, and this alone is the greatest firmament of obedience; whatsoever can be the measure of conscience "est res fisci," is part of your own propriety, and enters into the exchequer.

Be pleased therefore, gracious Sir, to accept this instance of my duty to God, to your Majesty, and to your^{*} great charge, the church of England. There are in it many things intended for the service, but nothing to deserve any of these great interests. Those cases that concern the power and offices of ecclesiastical superiors and supreme, were (though in another manner) long since done by the incomparable Mr. Hooker^d, and the learned Archbishop of Spalato^e: but their labours were unhappily lost, and never saw the light. And though I cannot attain to the strength of these champions of David and guardians of the temple; yet since their portion of work is fallen into my hand, I have heartily endeavoured to supply that loss; though with no other event, but as charitable passengers by their little, but well-meaning, alms repair the breaches of his fortune, who was greatly undone by the war or fire. But therefore I humbly beg your Majesty's pardon in all things where my weaknesses make me to despair of your

^d Lib. 7, 8. of Eccles. Polity.

^e Lib. 8. de Rep. Eccles.

more gracious acceptance: and here I am therefore to be confident, because your mercy is, as your Majesty, this day in her exaltation, felt by all your subjects; and therefore humbly to be hoped for by

Great Sir,

Your Majesty's

Most dutiful and most obedient Subject,

JER. TAYLOR.

P R E F A C E.

THE reformation of religion in the western churches hath been so violently, so laboriously, so universally, opposed by evil spirits and evil men, by wilfulness and ignorance, by prejudice and interest, by error and partiality; and itself also hath been done so imperfectly in some places, and so unskilfully in some others, because the thick and long-incumbent darkness had made it impossible to behold the whole light in all its splendour; that it was found to be work enough for the ministers of religion to convince the gainsayers, to oppose their witty arts by the advantageous representement of wise truths, so to keep the people from their temptations. But since there were not found many able to do this but such which had other cures to attend, the conduct of souls in their public and private charges, and the consequent necessity of preaching and catechising, visiting the sick, and their public daily offices; it was the less wonder that in the reformed churches there hath been so great a scarcity of books of conscience: though it was not to be denied but the careless and needless neglect of receiving private confessions hath been too great a cause of our not providing materials apt for so pious and useful a ministration. But besides this, it is certain that there was a necessity of labouring to other purposes than formerly: and this necessity was present and urgent; and the hearts and heads of men ran to quench that fire, and left the government of the house more loosely, till they could discern whether the house would be burnt or no by the flames of contention which then brake out: only this duty was supplied by excellent preachings, by private conferences, by admonitions and answers given when some more pious and religious persons came to confessions, and as they were upon particular occasions required and invited. But for any public provisions of books of casuistical theology,

we were almost wholly unprovided; and, like the children of Israel in the days of Saul and Jonathan, we were forced to go down to the forges of the Philistines to sharpen every man his share and his coulter, his axe and his mattock. We had swords and spears of our own, enough for defence, and more than enough for disputation: but in this more necessary part of the conduct of consciences, we did receive our answers from abroad, till we found that our old needs were sometimes very ill supplied, and new necessities did every day arise.

Some of the Lutherans have indeed done something in this kind which is well; Balduinus, Bidenbachius, Dedeckanus, Konig, and the abbreviator of Gerard: some essays also have been made by others; Alstedius, Amesius, Perkins, and the late eloquent and reverend Bishop of Norwich. But yet our needs remain; and we cannot be well supplied out of the Roman storehouses: for though there the staple is, and very many excellent things exposed to view; yet we have found the merchants to be deceivers, and the wares too often falsified.

For, 1. If we consider what heaps of prodigious propositions and rules of conscience their doctors have given us, we shall soon perceive that there are so many boxes of poison in their repositories under the same paintings and specious titles, that as it will be impossible for every man to distinguish their ministries of health from the methods of death; so it will be unsafe for any man to venture indiscriminately. For who can safely trust that guide that teaches him, that “it is no deadly sin to steal, or privately against his will and without his knowledge to take a thing from him who is ready to give it if he were asked, but will not endure to have it taken without asking^a:”—that “it is no theft privately to take a thing that is not great, from our father^b:”—“that he who sees an innocent punished for what himself hath done, he in the meantime who did it, holding his peace, is not bound to restitution^c:”—that “he who falls into fornication if he goes to confession, may, the same day in which he did fornicate, receive the communion; that communion is manducation, and therefore requires not attention^d:”—“that he,

^a Eman. Sa Aphor. 5. Furtum. ^b Prov. xxviii. 24.

^c Idem. 5. Restitutio.

^d Diana de Euchar. in compend. n. 30—32.

who, being in deadly sin, receives the holy communion, commits but one sin, viz., that against the dignity of the sacrament; and that the omission of confession is no distinct sin, meaning, amongst them who believe confession to be of divine institution?"—As bad or worse are those affirmatives and doctrines of repentance: "A dying man is not tied to be contrite for his sins; but confession and attrition are sufficient^d;" and that we may know what is meant by attrition, we are told "it is a sorrow for temporal evil, disgrace, or loss of health, sent by God as a punishment, or feared to be sent^e;" this alone is enough for salvation, if the dying man do but confess to the priest, though he have lived wickedly all his lifetime. And that we need not think the matter of confession to be too great a burden, we are told, "He that examines his conscience before confession, sins if he be too diligent and careful." But as for the precept of having a contrite and a broken heart, "it binds not but in the article or danger of death: nor then, but when we cannot have the sacrament of the penance^f."—To these may be added those contradictions of severity for the securing of a holy life; that "if a man purpose at the present to sin no more, though at the same time he believes he shall sin again (that is, he will break his purpose), yet that purpose is good enough: that it is not very certain whether he that hath attrition, does receive grace, though he does not formally resolve to sin no more^g;" meaning, that it is probable, that it is not necessary to make any such resolution of leaving their sin; they are not certain it is so, nor certain that it is otherwise; that is, they find no commandment for these things: it may be they are counselled and advised in Scripture, but that is no great matter^h; for "it is no sin not to correspond with the divine inspirations exhorting us to counsels."—Add to these, that "to detract from our neighbour's fame before a conscientious, silent, and a good man, is no deadly sin: to dispense with our vows in a year of jubilee is valid, though the condition of obtaining that jubilee be not performedⁱ."—Thus men amongst them have leave to sin, and they may live in it, as long as their life lasts, without repentance: and that repent-

^d Idem de Poenit. n. 3. 7.

^e Num. 11. 17, 18.

^f Num. 18.

^g Num. 19.

^h Id. Verb. Detractio. num. 5.

ⁱ Dispensatio. num. 11.

ance in the sum of affairs is nothing but to call to the priest to absolve them; provided you be sorrowful for the evil you feel or fear God will send on you: but contrition, or sorrow proceeding from the love of God, is not at all necessary; “neither is it necessary that our sorrow be thought to be contrition^k; neither is it necessary that attrition should go before confession, but will serve if it be some time after; and if you confess none but venial sins, it is sufficient if you be sorrowful for one of them; and the case is the same for mortal sins formerly confessed!” But I am ashamed of this heap of sad stories: if I should amass together what themselves have collected in their books, it would look like a libel: but who is pleased with variety of such sores, may enter into the hospitals themselves, and walk and look till he be weary.

2. But not only with the evil matter of their propositions; but we have reason to be offended with the strange manner of their answerings. I shall not need to instance in that kind of argument which is but too frequent among those who prevail more by their authority than their reason, of proving propositions by similitudes and analogies. I remember that Gregory Sayr^m says, that all precepts of the moral law are to be reduced to the decalogue; because as all natural things are reduced to ten predicaments, so it is expedient that all kinds of virtue and vice be reduced to the ten commandments. And Bessæus infers seven sacraments from the number of the planets, and the seven ears of full corn in Egypt, and seven waterpots changed into wine (though they were but six), because as the wine filled six waterpots, so the sacrament of the eucharist fills the other six, and itself makes the seventh; and that therefore peradventure the sacraments are called vessels of grace. But this I look upon as a want of better arguments in a weak cause, managed by careless and confident persons; and note it only as a fault, that the guides of consciences should speak many things, when they can prove but few.

3. That which I suppose to be of greatest consideration is, that the casuists of the Roman church take these things for resolution and answer to questions of conscience, which are spoken by an authority that is not sufficient; and they

^k Concil. Trid. sess. 14. cap. 4. ^l Dian. Compend. de Pœnit. Sacram. n. 8
^m Clavis Regia, lib. 4. c. 2. n. 5.

admit of canons, and the epistles of popes, for authentic warranties, which are suspicious, whether ever they were written by them to whose authority only they do pretend ;— and they quote sayings of the old doctors, which are contradicted by others of equal learning and reputation, and all cited in their own canon law ; and have not any sufficient means to ascertain themselves what is binding in very many cases argued in their canons, and decretal epistles, and bulls of popes. Nay, they must needs be at a loss in their conduct of consciences, especially in all inquiries and articles of faith, when they choose such foundations, which themselves know to be weak and tottering ; and yet lay the greatest load upon such foundations, and tie the conscience with the hardest ligature, where it is certain they can give no security, For it is not agreed in the church of Rome, neither can they tell upon whose authority they may finally rely ; they cannot tell who is the visible head of the church : for they are not sure the pope is ; because a council may be superior to him, and whether it be or no, it is not resolved : and therefore either they must change their principle, and rely only upon scriptures and right reason and universal testimonies, or give no answer to the conscience in very many cases of the greatest concernment ; for by all other measures their questions are indeterminable. But the authority of man they make to be their foundation : and yet if their allegations were allowed to be good argument, it would serve them but to very few purposes, since the doctors, whose affirmative is the decision of the case, are so infinitely divided.

4. This to me, and to very many wise men, looks like a very great objection : but I find that they who are most concerned in it, account it none ; for the Roman casuists profess it ; and yet do not suppose that the consequent of this should be, that the case is difficult, and the men not to be relied upon, and the conscience to be otherwise informed, and that we ought to walk the more warily, but therefore the conscience is at liberty, and the question in order to practice hath no difficulty ; hard in the case, but easy in the action : for by this means they entertain all interests, and comply with all persuasions, and send none away unsatisfied. For uncertain answers make with them no uncertain resolution ; for they teach us, that in such cases we may follow either part : and therefore they studiously keep up this acade mical or rather

churches into a union of faith, like beasts into a pound, yet they have made their cases of conscience and the actions of their lives unstable as the face of the waters, and immeasurable as the dimensions of the moon ; by which means their confessors shall be enabled to answer according to every man's humour, and no man shall depart sad from their penitential chairs, and themselves shall take or give leave to any thing ; concerning which I refer the reader to the books and letters written by their parties of Port-Royal, and to their own weak answers and vindications.

If I were willing, by accusing others, to get reputation to my own, or the undertakings of any of our persuasion or communion, I could give very many instances of their injustice and partialities in determining matters and questions of justice, which concern the church and their ecclesiastical persons ; as if what was just amongst the reprobates of the laity were hard measure if done to an ecclesiastic, and that there were two sorts of justice, the one for世俗s and the other for churchmen ; of which their own books^r give but too many instances. I could also remark that the monks and friars are ‘ iniquiores in matrimonium,’ and make inquiries into matrimonial causes with an impure curiosity, and make answers sometimes with spite and envy, sometimes with licentiousness ; that their distinction of sins mortal and venial hath intricated and confounded almost all the certainty and answers of moral theology ; but nothing of this is fitted to my intention, which is only to make it evident that it was necessary that cases of conscience should be written over anew, and established upon better principles, and proceed in more sober and satisfying methods : nothing being more requisite than that we should all “ be instructed, and thoroughly prepared to every good work ;” that we should “ have a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man ;” that we should be able “ to separate the vile from the precious,” and know what to choose and what to avoid ; that “ we may have our senses exercised to discern between good and evil,” that he may not “ call good evil, or evil good.” For since obedience is the love of God, and to do well is the life of religion, and the end of faith is the

^r Vide Summas Cas. Consc. in verbis, Immunitas. Ecclesia. Hospitale. Privilegium. Clericus. Monasterium, &c.

death of sin and the life of righteousness ; nothing is more necessary than that we be rightly informed in all moral notices ; because in these things an error leads on to evil actions, to the choice of sin, and the express displeasure of God ; otherwise than it happens in speculation and ineffective notices and school-questions.

And indeed upon this consideration I was always confident, that though the questions of the school were nice and subtle, difficult and very often good for nothing ; yet that in moral theology I should have found so perfect an accord, so easy determination of questions, that it would have been harder to find out questions than answers ; and the great difficulty in books of this subject would be to put the great number of inquiries into order and method. I was not deceived in the ground and reason of my conjecture ; because I knew that “*in promtu et facili est æternitas* ;” God had made the way to heaven plain and simple ; and what was necessary did lie open, and the lines of duty were to be read by every eye, or heard and learned by all understandings ; and therefore it is certain that all practical truths are to be found out without much contention and dispute, because justice and obedience to God in all moral conversation are natural to us, just as logic and discourse are. But when I came to look a little nearer, I found that men were willing enough to be tied up to believe the inactive propositions of the doctors, but would keep a liberty of pleasing themselves in matters of life and conversation : in the former they would easily be governed by leading men ; but in the latter they would not obey God himself, and without great regret would not be confined to strictness and severity in their cases of conscience. Some would ; but many would not. They that would, gave laws unto themselves, and they could easily be governed ; but they that would not, were ready to trample upon their yoke, if it were not made gentle and easy for their neck. But this was the least part of the evil.

For besides this, moral theology was made a trade for the house, and an art of the schools : and as nothing is more easy than natural logic, and yet nothing harder than sophistical, so it is in moral theology ; what God had made plain, men have intricated ; and the easy commandment is wrapped up in uneasy learning ; and by the new methods, a simple

and uncrafty man cannot be ‘wise unto salvation;’ which is but small comfort to him that stands in the place of the idiot and unlearned. Sometimes a severe commandment is expounded by the sense of ease and liberty, and the liberty is established in rule; but because the rule is not true in some hundreds of cases, a conscientious man does not know how to make use of it: and if the commandment be kept close to the sense of strictness and severity, there are so many outlets and escapes found out, that few men think themselves obliged. Thus in the rule, “*Spoliatur ante omnia restituendum,*” which is an excellent measure of conscience in many cases, and certainly can have no direct abatement in the duty, and the party obliged can only be relieved by equity in the manner of doing it; yet of this plain and easy rule, Gabrielius brings no less than threescore and ten limitations: and to make all questions of that nature and the rule of conscience infinite and indeterminable, Menochius hath seven hundred ninety and eight questions concerning ‘possession;’—and “who is sufficient for these things?”—There is a rule amongst the lawyers which very much relates to the conscience of those men, who are engaged in suits and sentences of law in all countries which are ruled by the civil law: “*In quolibet actu requiritur citatio.*” Of this rule Porcius brings a hundred and sixteen ampliations, and a hundred and four-and-twenty limitations.—Maranta enumerates forty cases, in which a negative ought to be proved: and Socinus sets down eight hundred and two ‘fallencies’ (that is the word of the law), concerning the contestation of suits and actions at law. Many more might be reckoned even in the interpreters of the civil law, and in the measures we derive from thence. But if any man thinks it better in the canon law, which is supposed to be as great a rule of our conscience in the matter of religion as the other is of justice; I shall only say, that the very title of the canon law was ‘*Concordantia Discordantium*,’ a tying of contradictions together in one string: and when you begin to look into the interpreters of the ‘*Decretum*,’ which is the best part of the canon law, Simoncellus tells that the word ‘*decretum*’ hath five-and-twenty significations. So that there is a wood before your doors, and a labyrinth within the wood, and locks

and bars to every door within that labyrinth ; and after all we are like to meet with unskilful guides ; and yet of all things in the world, in these things an error is the most intolerable.

But thus the enemy of mankind hath prevailed upon us, • while we were earnest in disputations about things less concerning : then he was watchful and busy to interweave evil and uncertain principles into our moral institutions, to entangle what was plain, to divide what was simple, to make an art of what was written in the tables of our hearts with the finger of God. When a gentleman was commending Dr. Fisher's (bishop of Rochester) great pains in the confutations of Luther's books, the wise prelate said heartily, that he wished he had spent all that time in prayer and meditation which he threw away upon such useless wranglings. For that was the wisdom of the ancients : “ *Antiqua sapientia nihil aliud quam facienda et vitanda præcepit : et tunc meliores erant viri.* Postquam docti prodierunt, boni desunt. Simplex enim illa et aperta virtus in obscuram et solerter scientiam versa est ; docemurque disputare non vivere : “ Our fore-fathers taught their children what to do and what to avoid ; and then men were better. But when men did strive to become learned, they did not care so much to become good ; then they were taught to dispute rather than to live^t. ” To this purpose I understand that excellent saying of Solomon ; “ Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter. Fear God and keep his commandments ; for this is the whole duty of man^u : ”—meaning, that books which serve to any other purpose, are a laborious vanity, consumptive of our time and health to no purpose : nothing else being to any purpose but such things which teach us to fear God, and how to keep his commandments. All books, and all learning, which minister to this end, partake of the goodness of the end ; but that which promotes it not, is not to be regarded : and therefore the Chaldee paraphrast reads these words into an advice of making many books tending to holiness : “ *Fili mi, moritus esto ut facias libros sapientiae plurimos, adeo ut non sit finis ; et ut studeas verbis legis, conspiciasque defatigationem carnis :* ” “ Make books of wisdom very many, and study in the words of the law till thou

^t Seneca ad Lucil.

^u Eccles. xii. 12.

mayest see the weariness of thy flesh : ” “ Beata ætas quæ in vita hominum regenda totam disputandi rationem posuit ; ” “ Blessed are the times in which men learn to dispute well that they may live the better.”—And truly it were much to be wished that men would do so now ; endeavouring to teach the ways of godliness in sincerity : to shew to men the right paths of salvation ; to describe the right and plain measures of simplicity, Christian charity, chastity, temperance, and justice ; to unwind the entanglements of art, and to strip moral theology of all its visors ; to detract all the falsehoods and hypocrisies of crafty men ; to confute all the false principles of evil teachers, who by uncertain and deceitful grounds teach men to walk confidently upon trap-doors and pitfalls, and preach doctrines so dangerous and false, that if their disciples would live according to the consequents of such doctrines, without doubt they must perish everlastingily.

It is a great work and too heavy for one man’s shoulders ; but somebody must begin ; and yet no man ever would, if he can be affrighted with the consideration of any difficulty in the world. But I have laid aside all considerations of myself, and with an entire dependence upon God for help, I have begun an institution of moral theology, and established it upon such principles and instruments of probation which every man allows, and better than which we have none imparted to us. I affirm nothing but upon grounds of Scripture, or universal tradition, or right reason discernible by every disinterested person, where the questions are of great concern, and can admit of these probations : where they cannot, I take the next best ; the laws of wise commonwealths and the sayings of wise men, the results of fame and the proverbs of the ancient, the precedents of holy persons and the great examples of saints. Πεπαιδευμένου γάρ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον τάχεις ἐπιζητεῖν καθ’ ἔκαστον γένος, ἐφ’ ὃσον ἡ τοῦ πράγματος φύσις ἐπιδέχεται παραπλήσιον γὰρ φαίνεται, μαθηματικοῦ τε πιθανολόγοῦντος ἀποδέχεσθαι, καὶ ῥητορικὸν ἀποδεῖξεις ἀπαιτεῖν^x. “ He that is well instructed will require in every kind of argument and disputation no other proof or subtlety than the subject-matter will bear. For it were ridiculous for a mathematician to go about to persuade with eloquence, or an orator to pretend to demonstrations.”—But moral theo-

^x Arist. lib. 1. Eth. c. 3. Wilkinson, p. 5.

logy is a collective body of all wisdom, whereof some things are demonstrable, and many are probable, and other things are better than their contraries ; and they are to be proved accordingly, every thing in its proportion and capacity. And therefore here I make use of all the brocardics, or rules of interpreters ; that is, not only what is established regularly in law, but what is concluded wise and reasonable by the best interpreters. Socinus, Duennas, Azo, Gabrielius, Damasus, and divers other great lawyers, attempted this way in the interpretation of the civil and canon law. I intermeddle not in the question, whether they did well or ill, but leave the contest as it lies between Duarenus and Balduinus, who blame them, and Wesenbech and Gribaldus, who are their confident advocates. But in the discourses of conscience, whatsoever is right reason, though taken from any faculty or science, is also of use and efficacy. Because whatever can guide the actions or discourses, or be the business or the conduct, of any man, does belong to conscience and its measures ; and what is true in any science, is true in conscience. . .

I do not say that what is true or allowed in human laws is also true or allowed in the divine ; because though God does justly and wisely, yet men do not always so ; and what is true in sciences is not always understood to be true in civil laws. ‘ Qualis causa, talis effectus,’ saith the philosopher ; ‘ The cause and the effect are of the same nature.’—But the lawyer says, this is not always true. For manumission, which is a cause of liberty, is of the civil law and positive institution ; but liberty, which is the effect of it, is of the law of nature. Now although the philosopher understands his rule of natural causes and effects, or those causes which are artificial, but operate by the way of nature, and intends it not at all to be persuasive in matters of positive and legal institution ; yet this truth and all other truths must prevail in conscience, because they are emanations from the fountain of truth ; from whence nothing can derive that is not always true, and in all senses true, where they are intended to persuade or teach. But then the truths of philosophy must be used in the measures of conscience by the intentions of philosophy, and not be carried on to a disparate matter, and without cause be indifferently applied, the same words to things of another nature. There is a rule in philosophy,

“ *In corporalia sunt individua:*” from hence Hottoman argues, therefore dominion, heritage, ‘ *ususfructus*,’ or ‘ the use of a thing by him that is not the Lord,’ are individual, because they are incorporeal.—Now this will deceive him that trusts upon it: not because what is true in one place, is not true always and everywhere; but because these words applied to other matters, and the words signifying other intentions, they abuse the weary hearer, but instruct not. But because the questions of conscience do relate to all matters, therefore to these all arts and sciences do minister. “ *Res fisci est, ubicunque natat,*” “ *Whatsoever swims upon any water, belongs to this exchequer;*” that is, saith St. Austin^y, “ *Christianus Domini sui esse intelligit, ubicunque invenerit veritatem,*” “ *If it be truth, wheresoever it be found, the Christian knows it is his Lord’s goods:*” and therefore I have proved and adorned some truths with the wise saying of philosophers and poets, “ *ut Deo serviat quicquid puer utile didici,*” that (according to the expression of the same saint^z) “ *whatsoever, being a child, I learned which can profit, may be brought in to serve and pay homage to God.*”—But still they are to be understood according to the sense and meaning of their proper art where they dwell. And though there is great need of skill in all those sciences from whence we derive notices in order to the conduct of conscience; and that it will be hard for any man to pretend to be master of all those things which must be used in these discourses; yet I, who will not pretend to that, have yet taken as good a course as I could to inform myself, though not in the whole system of every art in the whole circle which I have here occasionally used, yet I have been careful to understand those few things, which I have thence drawn in as auxiliaries: and lest I should yet fail, I have taken another course by way of caution and defence, that I may be right and sure in the reflex, if I had cause to doubt of any thing in the direct notice.

For I have propounded to myself general measures to be as boundaries to the determination of doubts and the answer of questions; which so long as I do deserve, my error will be very innocent, if any happens. For, 1. In hard and intricate questions I take that which is easy and intelligible,

^y *De Doct. Christi. lib. 2. c. 18.*

^z *Confess. lib. 1. c. 15.*

and concerning which it will be easy to judge whether it be right or wrong. 2. In odious things, and matters of burden and envy, I take that part which is least, unless there be evident reason to the contrary. 3. In favours I always choose the largest sense, when any one is bettered by that sense, and no man is the worse. 4. In things and questions relating to men, I give those answers that take away scruples, and bring peace and a quiet mind. 5. In things relating to God, I always choose to speak that thing which to him is most honourable. 6. In matters of duty, I always choose that which is most holy. 7. In doubts I choose what is safest. 8. In probabilities, I prefer that which is the more reasonable, never allowing to any one a leave of choosing that, which is confessedly the less reasonable in the whole conjunction of circumstances and relative considerations.

Upon the account of these principles I hope to serve God and the good of souls. For these being the points of my compass, which way soever I sail, I shall not suffer shipwreck: and if at any time I go about, which I have avoided as much as my infirmities will permit, yet at last, and in the whole, I arrive where I ought to be. For indeed in this whole affair I have proceeded with great fear; as knowing that he who writes cases of conscience, does in a manner give laws to all that do believe him: and no man persuades more vehemently than he that tells you, ‘This, God forbids;—This, God commands;’ and therefore I knew that to be mistaken here was very evil, and might do much evil; but to be careless, or prejudicate, or partial or flattering, or oppressive with severity, or unsafe with gentleness, was criminal in the cause as well as mischievous in the event: and the greatest security which I have that I have not spoken unsafely in any man’s case, is, because that I have prayed much, and laboured much, that I might not at all minister to error or schism, to folly or vanity, but to the glory of God, and to the good of souls: and I have so determined every case that I have here presented, as I myself would practise, as I would account at the day of judgment, through the mercies of God in Jesus Christ, and the integrity and simplicity of my conscience: and therefore I desire that my reader will use the same caution and ingenuity before he condemns any conclusion, and consider, that as in these

things it was impossible to please every man, ἔργυμασιν ἐν μεγάλοις πᾶσιν ἀδεῖν χαλεπόν^z: so I designed to please no man but as he is a lover of truth, and a lover of his own soul.

The style that I here use, is according as it happens; sometimes plain, sometimes closer: the things which I bring are sometimes new, and sometimes old; they are difficult and they are easy; sometimes adorned with cases, and the cases specificated in stories, and sometimes instead of a story I recite an analogue, and disguise a true narrative with other names, that I may not discover the person whose case I discourse of: and in all things I mind the matter; and suppose truth alone and reason and the piety of the decision to be the best ornament; and indeed sometimes the thing itself will not be handled otherwise.

Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri.

I was here to speak to the understanding, not to win the affections; to convince, not to exhort: and where I had no certainty in a case, or that the parts of a question were too violently contended for, without sufficient evidence on either side, I have not been very forward to give my final sentence; but my opinion and my reason;

Per verbum forte respondent sœpe periti^a.

And yet I hope that in some cases it will be found, that though I am not fierce, positive, and decretory, yet the case itself is sufficiently declared, so that he who hath occasion to use it, may upon those accounts determine himself. For the modesty of him that teaches, is not always an argument that he is uncertain in his proposition. Τὸ νομίζω, καὶ τὸ δοκεῖν, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐ πάντως ἐπὶ ἀμφιβόλου τάττουσιν οἱ παλαιοὶ, ἀλλὰ πολλάκις καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀληθεύειν οὔτως οὖν καὶ τὸ νομίζω ἐνταῦθα ἀντὶ τοῦ κρίνω, καὶ πιστεύω, saith Ulpian^b. When the ancients said, ‘I suppose, I think, It seems,’ they did not always mean that they were uncertain; but they sometimes intended it for a modest, but a direct affirmative: and so I do in some few cases where there is great reason on one side, and a great prejudice on the other: I give my reasons, and lay down the case, and all its allays, and leave it to prevail without my sentence by its own strength. And

^z Solon. frag. Gaisford, p. 335.

^a Glos. in c. quorum appell. non recipiuntur. ^b E. 3. 15. ad Olynth. 1.

for this, I hope, no man will be offended at me: if he be, it is because I was not willing to offend him; but I was desirous to instruct, to comfort, to determine and to establish, him that needs.

I have studiously avoided all questions that are curious and unprofitable; such, I mean, which are only trials of wit, but neither ministers of justice nor religion. Such was that which was brought before the lawyers and all the learned men of Athens, with great noises to little purpose.—A gentleman of *Ægina*, dying, left three daughters^c; the one was beauteous and wanton; the second a lover of wine and gay pleasure; and the third a good spinster, and a great follower of country housewifery. He made the mother of these daughters to be his heir upon this condition, that she should divide all his estate between his daughters equally; but in such a manner, that what they received they should neither possess nor enjoy; as soon as ever they had quitted their portions, they should pay, each of them, to their mother ten thousand philippics. The mother runs to Athens, consults the lawyers and philosophers how this will should be fulfilled; but they know not, as supposing one part to cross another, and altogether to be impossible; for if the whole estate should be divided amongst them, how is it that they shall not enjoy it? and if they do not, how shall they pay their mother her assignment? The mother therefore, finding no help there, contrives it thus herself; to the pretty wanton she gives rich clothes, smooth eunuchs, soft beds, sweet perfumes, silver lavatories, and all things which, she supposed, might please her lust, and consume her portion. To the drinking girl she provides vessels of rich wines, a house well furnished, and all things fitted for expensive entertainments. But to the country housewife a good farm, ploughmen, and a great stock, many horses and some cows, some menservants and a great many maidens, a kennel of hounds and a few swine; supposing this was no very probable way for her to thrive, but the likeliest way to do her husband's will; because the lust of the first, and thirst and debauchery of the second, and the ill-contrived stock of the third, would consume all their portions. But all this while she considered not, how, when they grew poor, she should receive her share. But at last a wiser man than was in the schools of Athens

^c *Phædrus*, iv. 5.

advised her thus : Give to the drunken maiden the rich garments, the jewels, and the eunuchs ; and because she loves them not, she will sell them all for old wines of Chios :—to the wanton give fields and cattle, oxen and ploughs, hinds and swine : and she will quickly sell them that she may entertain her lovers :—but if you give vessels of wine to the country-girl, she knows not what to do with them, and therefore will sell them to the merchant for ready money. Thus shall neither of them enjoy their portion; but by selling it, they shall be enabled to pay the money to their mother.—This was a riddle, rather than a case of law or conscience ; and so are many others, which I therefore resolved to lay aside, and trouble no man's conscience or head with them ; as supposing that the answer of the dull Diodorus, mentioned in the Greek epigram, is sufficient for such curiosities.

"Η σοι, ή τῷ ἴλοντι, &c.^d

It is so, or it is not so ; it must be done this way, or some other ; the thing in question is yours, or somebody's else : but make the judge your friend, and I will warrant your cause, provided it be just ; but look you to that. A slight answer to an intricate and useless question is a fit cover to such a dish ; a cabbage-leaf is good enough to cover a pot of mushrooms : but I have taken a shorter way, and laid them all aside ; remembering the saying of Friar John Annias to Nicolaus de Lyra ; ‘ Testimonium Dei lucidum est, nec egent literæ divinæ plicis,’ ‘ The things of God are plain and easy :’ and therefore I have rejected every thing that is not useful and intelligible ; choosing only to make such inquiries by which we may become better, and promoted in something of our duty ;

Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri dignimur, ordo
 Quis datus, aut metæ quam mollis flexus, et undæ,
 Quis modus argento, quid fas optare, quid asper
 Utile nummus habet, patriæ, carisque propinquis
 Quantum elargiri deceat, quem te Deus esse
 Jussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re :

viz., that we may be taught how to know what God requires of us, ‘ instructed to salvation, and fitted to every good work.’

But now I shall desire that he who reads my book, will

^d Jacobs, Anthol. vol. 4. p. 26.—Brunck, iii. p. 57.

not expect this book to be a collective body of particular cases of conscience; for I find that they are infinite, and my life is not so; and I shall never live to write them all, or to understand them all: and if I should write some and not all, I should profit I know not whom, and do good but to a very few, and that by chance too; and, it may be, that their cases, being changed by circumstances, would not be fitted by my indefinite answers. I therefore resolved upon another way; which although no man before me hath trod in writing cases of conscience, yet I cannot say it is new; for I took my pattern from Tribonianus the lawyer, who out of the laws of the old Romans collected some choice rules, which give answer to very many cases that happen. And after I had considered and tried many others, I found this most reasonable, most useful, and most comprehensive, of all matters relating to my present undertaking. For I intend here to offer to the world a general instrument of moral theology, by the rules and measures of which, the guides of souls may determine the particulars that shall be brought before them; and those who love to inquire, may also find their duty so described, that unless their duties be complicated with laws, and civil customs, and secular interests, men that are wise may guide themselves in all their proportions of conscience: but if their case be indeed involved, they need the conduct of a spiritual guide, to untie the intrigue, and state the question, and apply the respective rules to the several parts of it; for though I have set them down all in their proper places relating to their several matters, yet when a question requires the reason of many rules, it is not every hand that can apply them: men will for ever need a living guide; and a wise guide of souls will, by some of these rules, be enabled to answer most cases that shall occur.

For although I have not given answers to every doubt, yet I have told what we are to do when any doubt arises; I have conducted the doubting conscience by such rules, which in all doubts will declare her duty: and therefore if the matter of the doubt be in the reception of the sacrament of the eucharist, or in wearing clothes, or in eating, the rule is the same and applicable to every matter. I have not disputed whether sumptuary laws be actually obligatory to us in England or Ireland; but I have told by what measures we shall

know concerning all laws, whether they be obligatory or no, in any place, and to every person. I have not expounded all the laws of God, but I have told by what rules they are to be expounded and understood. But because these rules have influence upon all particulars, I have, by way of instance and illustration, determined very many special cases: and I was a little curious to choose such which are the matter of our usual inquiries; and have been very studious to draw into particular scrutiny most of the principal and noblest questions of Christendom, which could relate to the matter of my rule; provided that they were practical and did minister to good manners; having that of Lactantius in my mind; “*Non tam de rebus humanis bene meretur, qui scientiam bene dicendi affert, quam qui pie et innocenter docet vivere:*” “He best deserves of mankind, who teaches men to live well rather than to talk well:” and therefore the wiser Greeks preferred philosophers before orators: “*Illi enim recte vivendi doctores sunt existimandi, quod est longe præstabilius:*” “It is better to be a doctor of good life, than of eloquent or learned speaking:” for they are but few who are capable of eloquence, but to live well is the duty of all: and I have always been pleased with the saying of Jupiter to Pallas in the dialogue, when he kissed her cheek for choosing the fruitful olive.

Nisi utile est, quod facimus, stulta est gloria e.

Unless it does good and makes us better, it is not worth the using: and therefore it hath been no small part of my labour not only to do what was necessary, but to lay aside what was useless and unfit, at least what I thought so.

In this manner by the divine assistance I have described a rule of conscience: in the performance of which I shall make no excuses for my own infirmities, or to guard myself from the censure of the curious or the scorers. I have with all humility and simplicity desired to serve God, and to minister to his church, and I hope he will accept me: and for the rest, I have laid it all at his most holy feet, and therefore will take no further care concerning myself in it. Only I am desirous that now I have attempted to describe a general rule, they who find it defective would be pleased to mak e

e Phædrus, iii. 17. Schwabe, vol. 2. p. 132.

this more perfect by adding their own symbol; which is much easier than to erect that building, which needs but some addition to make it useful to all its purposes and intentions. But if any man, like a bird sitting upon a tree, shall foul the fruit and dishonour it, that it may be unfit for food, I shall be sorrowful for him that does so, and troubled, that the good which I intended to every one, should be lost to any one. But I shall of the Prophet's^f comfort, if I have done my duty in righteousness and humility: "Though I labour in vain and spend my strength for nought, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work is with my God."—

I know not whether I shall live to add matter to this form, that is, to write a particular explication of all the precepts of Christian religion; which will be a full design of all special cases and questions of conscience measurable by this general rule. If I do not, I hope God will excite some other to do it; but whoever does it, he will do it with so much the more profit, by how much he does dispute the less; and I remember that Socrates and Sozomen tell, that *Ælius* the heretic was counted an atheist "propter eristicum loquendi et disputandi modum," because he taught no part of religion, but he minced it into questions and chopped it into Aristotle's logic. The simple and rational way of teaching God's commandments, as it is most easy, so it is most useful; and all the cases that will occur, will the most easily be answered by him, that considers and tells in what cases they bind, and in what they bind not: which is the duty of him that explicates, and may be delivered by way of plain rule and easy commentary.

But this I shall advertise; that the preachers may retrench infinite number of cases of conscience, if they will more earnestly preach and exhort to simplicity and love; for the want of these is the great multiplier of cases. Men do not serve God with honesty and heartiness, and they do not love him greatly; but stand upon terms with him, and study how much is lawful, how far they may go, and which is their utmost step of lawful, being afraid to do more for God and for their souls than is simply and indispensably necessary; and oftentimes they tie religion and their own lusts together, and the one entangles the other, and both are made less discernible, and

^f Isa. xl ix. 4.

less practicable. But the good man understands the things of God; not only because God's Spirit, by secret immissions of light, does properly instruct him; but because he hath a way of determining his cases of conscience which will never fail him. For if the question be put to him whether it be fit for him to give a shilling to the poor; he answers that it is not only fit, but necessary to do so much at least, and to make it sure, he will give two: and in matter of duty he takes to himself the greater share; in privileges and divisions of right, he is content with the least: and in questions of priority and dignity he always prevails by cession, and ever is superior by sitting lowest, and gets his will, first by choosing what God wills, and then what his neighbour imposes or desires. But when men have no love to God, and desire but just to save their souls, and weigh grains and scruples, and give to God no more than they must needs, they shall multiply cases of consciences to a number which no books will contain, and to a difficulty that no learning can answer.

The multiplication also of laws and ceremonies of religion does exceedingly multiply questions of practice; and there were among the Jews, by reason of their numerous rites, many more than there were at first among the Christians. For we find the apostles only exhorting to humility, to piety towards parents, to obedience to magistrates, to charity and justice; and the Christians who meant well understood well, and needed no books of conscience but the rule, and the commandment. But when error crept in, truth became difficult and hard to be understood: and when the rituals of the church and her laws became numerous, then religion was hard to be practised: and when men set up new interests, then the laws of conscience were so many, that as the laws of the old Romans,

— verba minantia fixo
Ære legebantur —

which at first were nailed in a brass plate upon a wall, became at last so numerous and filled so many volumes, that their very compendium made a large digest; so are these too many to be considered, or perfectly to be understood; and therefore either they must be cut off by simplicity and an honest heart, and contempt of the world, and our duty must

look for no measures but love and the lines of the *easy* commandment,—or else we can have no peace and no security. But with these there is not only collateral security, but very often a direct wisdom. Because he that endeavours to keep a good conscience and hath an honest mind, besides that he will inquire after his duty sufficiently, he will be able to tell very much of it himself; for God will assist him, and cause that “his own mind shall tell him more than seven watchmen that sit in a tower;” and if he miss, he is next to an excuse, and God is ready to pardon him: and therefore in what sect of Christianity soever any man is engaged, if he have an honest heart, and a good conscience, though he be in darkness, he will find his way out, or grope his way within; he shall be guided, or he shall be pardoned; God will pity him, and find some way for his remedy; and if it be necessary, will bring him out.

But however it come to pass, yet now that the inquiries of conscience are so extremely numerous, men may be pleased to observe that theology is not every man’s trade; and that it requires more wisdom and ability to take care of souls, than those men, who now-a-days run under the formidable burden of the preacher’s office, can bring from the places of their education and first employment. Which thing I do not observe, that by it I might bring reputation to the office of the clergy; for God is their portion and lot, and as he hath given them work enough, so he hath given them honour enough, though the world despise them: but I speak it for their sakes who do what they ought not, and undertake what they cannot perform; and consequently do more hurt to themselves and others than possibly they imagine; which it were better they should amend, than be put to answer for it before him, who loves souls better than he loved his life, and therefore would not intrust them to the conduct of such persons, who have need to be taught the plain things of salvation, and learn to do justice and charity, and the proper things of a holy religion.

Concerning myself I shall make no request to my reader, but that he will charitably believe I mean well, and have done my best. If any man be troubled that he hath expected this nothing so long; I cannot make him other answer, but that I am afraid it is now too soon: and I bless God that I had

abilities of health and leisure now at last to finish it: but I should have been much longer, if God had not, by the piety of one of his servants, provided for me a comfortable retirement and opportunity of leisure: which if I have improved to God's glory, or to the comfort and institution of any one, he and I both have our ends, and God will have his glory; and that is a good conclusion, and to that I humbly dedicate my book.

*From my study in Portmore in Kilullagh,
October 5, 1659.*

RULE OF CONSCIENCE.

BOOK I.

OF CONSCIENCE, THE KINDS OF IT, AND THE GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCTING THEM.

CHAP. I.

THE RULE OF CONSCIENCE IN GENERAL.

RULE I.

Conscience is the Mind of a Man governed by a Rule, and measured by the Proportions of Good and Evil, in Order to Practice ; viz., to conduct all our Relations, and all our Intercourse, between God, our Neighbours, and ourselves : that is, in all moral Actions.

1. GOD governs the world by several attributes and emanations from himself. The nature of things is supported by his power, the events of things are ordered by his providence, and the actions of reasonable creatures are governed by laws, and these laws are put into a man's soul or mind as into a treasury or repository : some in his very nature, some by after-actions, by education and positive sanction, by learning and custom ; so that it was well said of St. Bernard^g; ‘ *Conscientia candor est lucis æternæ, et speculum sine macula Dei Majestatis, et imago bonitatis illius :*’ ‘ Conscience is the brightness and splendour of the eternal light, a spotless mirror of the Divine Majesty, and the image of the goodness of God.’ It is higher which Tatianus said of conscience ; *Μόνος εἶναι συνείδησιν Θεὸν*, ‘ Conscience is God unto us ;’ which saying he had from Menander,

Βροτοῖς ἀπαντει συνείδησις Θεὸς,

and it had in it this truth, that God, who is every where in

^g Lib. de Interior. Domo.

several manners, hath the appellative of his own attributes and effects in the several manners of his presence.

Jupiter est quodcumque vides, quo cumque moveris.

2. That providence which governs all the world, is nothing else but God present by his providence: and God is in our hearts by his laws: he rules in us by his substitute, our conscience. God sits there and gives us laws; and as God said to Moses^l, “ I have made thee a god to Pharaoh,” that is, to give him laws, and to minister in the execution of those laws, and to inflict angry sentences upon him; so hath God done to us. He hath given us conscience to be in God’s stead to us, to give us laws, and to exact obedience to those laws, to punish them that prevaricate, and to reward the obedient. And therefore conscience is called *oiketos φύλαξ, ἔνοικος Θεὸς, επιτοπος δαιμων*, ‘the household guardian,’ ‘the domestic god,’ ‘the spirit or angel of the place:’ and when we call God to witness, we only mean, that our conscience is right, and that God and God’s vicar, our conscience, knows it. So Lactantius^k; ‘ Meminerit Deum se habere testem, id est, ut ego arbitror, mentem suam, qua nihil homini dedit Deus ipse divinus:’ ‘ Let him remember that he hath God for his witness, that is, as I suppose, his mind; than which God hath given to man nothing that is more divine.’—In sum, it is the image of God: and as in the mysterious Trinity, we adore the will, memory, and understanding,—and theology contemplates three persons in the analogies, proportions, and correspondences, of them: so in this also we see plainly that conscience is that likeness of God, in which he was pleased to make man. For although conscience be primarily founded in the understanding, as it is the lawgiver, and dictator: and the rule and dominion of conscience ‘ fundatur in intellectu,’ ‘ is established in the understanding part;’ yet it is also memory, when it accuses or excuses, when it makes joyful and sorrowful; and there is in it some mixture of will, as I shall discourse in the sequel; so that conscience is a result of all, of understanding, will, and memory.

3. But these high and great expressions are better in the spirit than in the letter; they have in them something of

^l Lucan, ix. 580. Oudendorp. p. 720.

^k Lib. 6, de Vero Cultu. cap. 24.

^l Exod. vii. 1.

institution, and something of design, they tell us that conscience is a guard and a guide, a rule and a law set over us by God, and they are spoken to make us afraid to sin against our conscience, because by so doing we sin against God ; he having put a double bridle upon us, society and solitude, that is, company and ourselves, or rather, God and man ; it being now impossible for us to sin in any circumstances, but we shall have a reprobation : *ἴνα μήτε φόνωσις ἐπεγέιγη σε τῷ τοῦ πεῖστον, μήτε κοινωνία εὐαπολόγυητὸν σοι ποιήσῃ τὴν ἀμαρτίαν*, as Hierocles¹ said well ; that neither company may give countenance or excuse to sin, or solitariness may give confidence or warranty ; for as we are ashamed to sin in company, so we ought to fear our conscience, which is God's watchman and intelligencer.

4. To which purpose it was soberly spoken of Tertullian^m, ‘ conscientia optima testis Divinitatis ; ’ ‘ Our conscience is the best argument in the world to prove there is a God : ’ for conscience is God's deputy ; and the inferior must suppose a superior ; and God and our conscience are like relative terms, it not being imaginable why some persons in some cases should be amazed and troubled in their minds for their having done a secret turpitude, or cruelty ; but that conscience is present with a message from God, and the men feel inward causes of fear, when they are secure from without : that is, they are forced to fear God, when they are safe from men. And it is impossible that any man should be an atheist, if he have any conscience : and for this reason it is, there have been so few atheists in the world, because it is so hard for men to loose their conscience wholly.

5. Quest. Some dispute whether it be possible or no for any man to be totally without conscience. Tertullian's sentence in this article is this : ‘ Potest obumbrari, quia non est Deus : extingui non potest, quia à Deo est : ’ ‘ It is not God, and therefore may be clouded : but it is from God, and therefore cannot be destroyed.’—But I know a man may wholly lose the use of his reason ; some men are mad, and some are natural fools, and some are sots, and stupid ; such men as these lose their conscience, as they lose their reason : and as some madmen may have a fancy that there is no sun ; so some fools may say there is no God : and as they can be-

^l Needham, p. 62, at the bottom.

^m Lib de Testimon. Animæ.

lieve that,—so they can lose their conscience, and believe this. But as he that hath reason or his eyes, cannot deny but there is such a thing as the sun, so neither can he that hath conscience, deny there is a God. For as the sun is present by his light which we see daily, so is God by our conscience which we feel continually: we feel one as certainly as the other.

6. (1.) But it is to be observed, that conscience is sometimes taken for the practical intellective faculty; so we say, The law of nature, and the fear of God, are written in the conscience of every man.

(2.) Sometimes it is taken for the habitual persuasion and belief of the principles written there; so we say, He is a good man, and makes conscience of his ways. And thus we also say, and it is true, that a wicked person is of a profligate and ‘lost conscience;’ he ‘hath no conscience’ in him. That is, he hath lost the habit, or that usual persuasion and recourse to conscience, by which good men govern their actions.

(3.) Or the word conscience is used effectively, for any single operation and action of conscience: so we speak of particulars, ‘I make a conscience of taking up arms in this cause.’ Of the first and last acceptation of the word ‘conscience’ there is no doubt; for the last may, and the first can never, be lost: but for the second, it may be lost more or less, as any other habit can: though this with more difficulty than any thing else, because it is founded so immediately in nature, and is so exercised in all the actions and intercourses of our life, and is so assisted by the grace of God, that it is next to impossible to lose the habit entirely; and that faculty that shall to eternal ages do the offices which are the last, and such as suppose some preceding actions, I mean, to torment and afflict them for not having obeyed the former act of dictate and command, cannot be supposed to die in the principle, when it shall be eternal in the emanation; for the worm shall never die.

For, that men do things against their conscience, is no otherwise than as they do things against their reason; but a man may as well cease to be a man, as to be wholly without conscience. For the drunkard will be sober, and his conscience will be awake next morning: this is a perpetual pulse, and though it may be interrupted, yet if the man be alive, it will beat before he dies; and so long as we believe

a God, so long our conscience will at least teach us, if it does not also smite us: but as God sometimes lets a man go on in sin and does not punish him, so does conscience; but in this case, unless the man be smitten and awakened before he dies, both God and the conscience reserve their wrath to be inflicted in hell. It is one and the same thing, God's wrath, and an evil guilty conscience; for by the same hand by which God gives his law, by the same he punishes them that transgress the law. God gave the old law by the ministry of angels; and when the people broke it, 'he sent evil angels among them'; now God gives us a law in our consciences, and there he hath established the penalty; this is the 'worm that never dies'; let it be trod upon never so much here, it will turn again. It cannot die here, and it shall be alive for ever.

But by explicating the parts of the rule, we shall the best understand the nature, use, and offices, of conscience.

Conscience is the Mind of a Man.

7. When God sent the blessed Jesus into the world to perfect all righteousness, and to teach the world all his Father's will, it was said, and done, "I will give my laws in your hearts, and in your minds will I write them;" that is, 'you shall be governed by the law of natural and essential equity and reason, by that law which is put into every man's nature: and besides this, whatsoever else shall be superinduced, shall be written in your minds by the Spirit, who shall write all the laws of Christianity in the tables of your consciences. He shall make you to understand them, to perceive their relish, to remember them because you love them, and because you need them, and cannot be happy without them: he shall call them to your mind, and inspire new arguments and inducements to their observation, and make it all as natural to us, as what we were born with.'

8. Our mind being thus furnished with a holy rule, and conducted by a divine guide, is called "conscience;" and is the same thing which in Scripture is sometimes called "the heart;" there being in the Hebrew tongue, no proper word for conscience, but instead of it they use the word **בַּلְעֵד** 'the

ⁿ Psal. lxxviii. 49.

o Heb. x. 16. Jer. xxxi. 33.

heart^p; “Oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth,” that is, thy conscience knoweth, “that thou thyself hast cursed others,” so in the New Testament; “Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we peace towards God^q,” viz., if in our own consciences we are not condemned. Sometimes it is called ‘spirit,’ the third ingredient of the constitution of a Christian; the spirit, distinct from soul and body. For as our body shall be spiritual in the resurrection, therefore because all its offices shall entirely minister to the spirit, and converse with spirits, so may that part of the soul,—which is wholly furnished, taught and conducted by the spirit of grace, and whose work it is wholly to serve the spirit,—by a just proportion of reason be called the spirit. This is that which is affirmed by St. Paul; “The word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, dividing the soul and the spirit^r;” that is, the soul is the spirit separated by the word of God, instructed by it, and, by relation to it, is called the spirit. And this is the sense of Origent; “Testimonia sane conscientiae uti Apostolus dicit eos, qui descriptam continent in cordibus legem,” &c. “The Apostle says, that they use the testimony of conscience, who have the law written in their hearts. Hence it is necessary to inquire what that is which the Apostle calls conscience, whether it be any other substance than the heart or soul. For of this it is elsewhere said that it reprehends, but is not reprehended, and that it judges a man, but itself is judged of no man: as John saith, ‘If our conscience condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.’ And again, St. Paul himself saith in another place, ‘Our glorying is this, even the testimony of our conscience;’ because therefore I see so great a liberty of it, that in good things it is always glad and rejoices, but in evil things it is not reproved, but reprobates and corrects the soul itself to which it does adhere; I do suppose that this is the very spirit, which by the Apostle is said to be with the soul, as a pedagogue and social governor, that it may admonish the soul of better things, and chastise her for her faults, and reprove her: because ‘no man knows the things of a man but the

^p Eccles. vii. 22.—Apud Syros conscientia dicitur קַרְבָּן à radice קַרְבָּן formavit, depinxit, descripsit; quia scilicet conscientia notat et pingit actiones nostras in tabula cordis.

^q 1 John, iii. 21.

^r Heb. iv. 12.

^r Prov. xviii. 14.

^t In Epist. ad Rom. cap. ii. lib. 2,

spirit of a man which is in him; and that is the spirit of our conscience, concerning which, he saith, that spirit gives testimony to our spirit.”—So far Origen.

9. Thus, conscience is the mind, and God “ writing his laws in our minds,” is, informing our conscience, and furnishing it with laws, and rules, and measures, and it is called by St. Paul, *vόμας τοῦ νοὸς*, ‘ the law of the mind^u;’ and though it is once made a distinct thing from the mind (as in those words^x, “ their minds and consciences are defiled,”) yet it happens in this word as in divers others, that it is sometimes taken largely, sometimes specifically and more determinately: the mind is all the whole understanding part, it is the memory; so Peter ‘ called to mind’ the word that Jesus spake^y, that is, he remembered it. It is, the signification or meaning, the purpose or resolution. “ No man knoweth the mind of the spirit, but the spirit^z. ” It is the discursive or reasoning part; “ Mary cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be^a. ” It is the assenting and determining part; “ Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind^b; ” and it is also taken for conscience, or that treasure of rules which are in order to practice. And therefore, when St. Paul intended to express the anger of God punishing evil men with evil consciences and false persuasions, in order to criminal actions, and evil worshippings, he said, “ God gave them over, *eἰς νοῦν ἀδόκιμον*, to a reprobate mind^c, ” that is, to a conscience evil, persuaded, furnished with false practical principles; but the return to holiness, and the improvement of a holy conscience, is called, “ a being renewed in the spirit of our mind^d, ” *ἀνακαίνωσις τοῦ νοὸς*, “ the renovation of the mind^e. ”

10. Now there are two ways by which God reigns in the mind of a man, 1. Faith; and, 2. Conscience. Faith contains all the treasures of divine knowledge and speculation. Conscience is the treasury of divine commandments and rules in practical things. Faith tells us why; conscience tells us what we are to do. Faith is the measure of our persuasions; conscience is the measure of our actions. And as faith is a gift of God, so is conscience; that is, as the understanding

^u Rom. vii. 23.

^x Titus, i. 15.

^y Mark, xiv. 72.

^z 1 Cor. ii. 11.

^a Luke, i. 29.

^b Rom. xiv. 5.

^c Rom. i. 28.

^d Ephes. iv. 28.

^e Rom. xii. 2.

of a man is taught by the Spirit of God in Scripture, what to believe, how to distinguish truth from errors; so is the conscience instructed to distinguish good and evil, how to please God, how to do justice and charity to our neighbour, and how to treat ourselves; so that when the revelations of Christ and the commandments of God are fully recorded in our minds, then we are ‘perfectly instructed to every good work.’

Governed by a Rule.

11. St. Bernard^e comparing the conscience to a house, says it stands upon seven pillars. 1. Good will. 2. Memory of God’s benefits. 3. A clean heart. 4. A free spirit. 5. A right soul. 6. A devout mind. 7. An enlightened reason. These indeed are, some of them, the fruits and effects, some of them are the annexes and appendages, of a good conscience, but not the foundations or pillars upon which conscience is built. For as for

1. *Good Will,—*

12. Conscience relies not at all upon the will directly. For though a conscience is good or bad, pure or impure; and so the doctors of mystic theology divide and handle it; yet a conscience is not made so by the will, formally, but by the understanding. For that is a good conscience, which is rightly taught in the word of life; that is impure and defiled, which hath entertained evil and ungodly principles; such is theirs, who follow false lights, evil teachers, men of corrupt minds. For the conscience is a judge and a guide, a monitor and a witness, which are the offices of the knowing, not of the choosing faculty. “*Spiritum, correctorem, et paedagogum animæ,*” so Origen^f calls it; “the instructor of the soul, the spirit, the corrector.”—“*Naturale judicatorium,*” or “*naturalis vis judicandi,*” so St. Basil.—“The natural power of judging or nature’s judgment-seat.”—“*Lumen intellectus nostri,*” so Damascen calls it, “the light of our understanding.” The conscience does accuse or excuse a man before God, which the will cannot. If it could, we should all stand upright at doomsday, or at least those would be acquitted, who fain would do well, but miss, who do the things they love not, and love those they do not; that is, “they who strive to enter in, but shall not be able.”

^e De Interior. Domo, cap. 7.

^f Ubi supra. In Psal. xlviii.

But to accuse or excuse is the office of a faculty which can neither will nor choose, that is, of the conscience, which is properly a record, a book, and a judgment-seat.

13. But I said, conscience relies not upon the will directly; yet it cannot be denied, but the will hath force upon the conscience collaterally and indirectly. For the evil will perverts the understanding, and makes it believe false principles: “deceiving and being deceived” is the lot of false prophets; and they that are “given over to believe a lie,” will live in a lie, and do actions relative to that false doctrine, which evil manners first persuaded and introduced. For although it cannot be, that heretics should sin in the article against the actual light of their consciences, because he that wittingly and willingly sins against a known truth, is not properly a heretic but a blasphemer, and sins against the Holy Ghost; and he that sees a heretic run to the stake or to the gallows, or the Donatist kill himself, or the Circumcellian break his own neck with as much confidence to bear witness to his heresy, as any of the blessed martyrs to give testimony to Christianity itself, cannot but think he heartily believes, what so willingly he dies for; yet either heretics do sin voluntarily, and so distinguish from simple errors; or else they are the same thing, and either every simple error is damnable, or no heresy. It must therefore be observed, that

14. The will of man is the cause of its actions either mediately or immediately. Some are the next products of our will; such are pride, ambition, prejudice, and these blind the understanding, and make an evil and a corrupted conscience, making it an incompetent judge of truth and error, good and evil. So that the corruption of conscience in a heretic is voluntary in the principle, but miserable and involuntary in the product; it may proceed from the will efficiently, but it is formally a depravation of the understanding.

15. And therefore our wills also must be humble, and apt, and desirous to learn, and willing to obey. ‘Obedite et intelligetis;’ By humility and obedience we shall be best instructed. Not that by this means the conscience shall receive direct aids, but because by this means it will be left in its own aptnesses and dispositions, and when it is not hindered, the word of God will enter and dwell upon the conscience.

And in this sense it is that some say that ‘ Conscience is the inclination and propension of the will corresponding to practical knowledge.’ Will and conscience are like the ‘ cognati sensus,’ the touch and the taste; or the teeth and the ears, affected and assisted by some common objects, whose effect is united in matter and some real events, and distinguished by their formalities, or metaphysical beings.

2. Memory of God’s Benefits,

16. Is indeed a good engagement to make us dutiful, and so may incline the will: but it hath no other force upon the conscience but that it reminds us of a special obligation to thankfulness, which is a new and proper tie of duty: but it works only by a principle that is already in the conscience, viz., that we are specially obliged to our gracious lords; and the obedience that is due to God as our Lord, doubles upon us by love and zeal, when we remember him to be our bountiful patron, and our gracious Father.

3. A clean Heart,

17. May be an effect and emanation from a holy conscience; but conscience in itself may be either good or bad, or it may be good when the heart is not clean, as it is in all the worst men who actually sin against conscience, doing that which conscience forbids them. In these men the principles are holy, the instruction perfect, the law remaining, the persuasions uncancelled; but against all this torrent, there is a whirlwind of passions, and filthy resolutions, and wilfulness, which corrupt the heart, while as yet the head is uncorrupted in the direct rules of conscience. But yet sometimes a clean conscience and a clean heart are the same; and a good conscience is taken for holiness: so St. Paul⁶ uses the word, “ holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away have made shipwreck;” ὅτι τὴν Σεόθεν ἡκουσαν συνείδησιν ἀπιστίᾳ κατεμίγναν,—so Clemens Alexandrinus explices the place, “ they have by infidelity polluted their divine and holy conscience;” but St. Paul seems to argue otherwise, and that they, laying aside a good conscience, fell into infidelity: their hearts and conscience were first corrupted, and then they turned heretics. But this sense of a good conscience is that, which in mystic divinity is more pro-

perly handled, in which sense also it is sometimes used in law. “Idem est conscientia quod vir bonus intrinsece,” said Ungarellus^h out of Baldusⁱ; and from thence Aretine^k gathered this conclusion, that “if any thing be committed to the conscience of any one, they must stand to his determination, ‘et ab ea appellari non potest;’ ‘there lies no appeal,’ ‘Quia vir bonus, pro quo sumitur conscientia, non potest mentiri et falsum dicere vel judicare;’ ‘A good man, for whom the word conscience is used, cannot lie, or give a false judgment or testimony.’” Of this sort of conscience it is said by Ben Sirach^l, “Bonam substantiam habet, cui non est peccatum in conscientia:” “It is a man’s wealth to have no sin in our conscience.”—But in our present and future discourses, the word conscience is understood in the philosophical sense, not in the mystical, that is, not for the conscience as it is invested with the accidents of good or bad, but as it abstracts from both, but is capable of either,

4. *A free Spirit,*

18. Is the blessing an effect of an obedient will to a well-instructed conscience, and more properly and peculiarly to the grace of chastity, to honesty and simplicity; a slavish, timorous, a childish and trifling spirit, being the punishment inflicted upon David, before he repented of his fact with Bathsheba. But there is also a freedom which is properly the privilege, or the affection, of conscience, and is of great usefulness to all its nobler operations; and that is, a being clear from prejudice and prepossession, a pursuing of truths with holy purposes, and inquiring after them with a single eye, not infected with any sickness or unreasonableness. This is the same thing with that which he distinctly calls, 5. ‘a right soul.’ To this is appendant also, that the conscience cannot be constrained, it is of itself ‘a free spirit,’ and is subject to no commands, but those of reason and religion. God only is the Lord of our conscience, and the conscience is not to subject itself any more to the empire of sin, to the law of Moses, to a servile spirit, but to the laws of God alone, and the obedience of Jesus, willingly, cheerfully, and in all in-

^h Verb. Conscientia.

ⁱ In c. Cum. Causa de Testi.

^k In sect. Sed iste. Inst. t. de Act. GL in c. Statut. sect. Assess. Detent.

^l Ecclius. xiii. 30. alias 24.

stances, whether the commandment be conveyed by the Holy Jesus, or by his vicegerents. But of this I shall afterward give particular accounts.

6. A devout Mind,

19. May procure more light to the conscience, and assistances from the Spirit of wisdom, in cases of difficulty, and is a good remedy against a doubting and a scrupulous conscience; but this is but indirect, and by the intermission of other more immediate and proper intercourses.

But the last is perfectly the foundation of conscience.

7. An enlightened Reason.

20. To which if we add what St. Bernard before calls a 'right soul,' that is, an honest heart, full of simplicity and hearty attention, and ready assent, we have all that by which the conscience is informed and reformed, instructed and preserved, in its just measures, strengths, and relations. For the rule of conscience is all that notice of things and rules, by which God would have good and evil to be measured, that is, the will of God communicated to us by any means, by reason, and by enlightening, that is, natural and instructed. So that conscience is νοῦς φυσικὸς, and Θεοδιδάκτος, it is principled by creation, and it is instructed or illuminated in the regeneration. For God being the fountain of all good, and good being nothing but a conformity to him or to his will, what measures he makes, are to limit us. No man can make measures of good and evil, any more than he can make the good itself. Men sometimes give the instance in which the good is measured; but the measure itself is the will of God. For therefore it is good to obey human laws, because it is God's will we should; and although the man makes the law to which we are to give obedience, yet that is not the rule. The rule is the commandment of God, for by it obedience is made a duty.

Measured by the Proportions of Good and Evil.

21. That is, of that which God hath declared to be good or evil respectively, the conscience is to be informed. God hath taken care that his laws shall be published to all his subjects, he hath written them where they must needs read them, not in tables of stone or phylacteries on the forehead, but in a

secret table ; the conscience or mind of a man is the φυλακτήριον, the preserver of the court-rolls of heaven. But I added this clause to the former of ‘ a rule,’ because the express line of God’s rule is not the adequate measure of conscience : but there are analogies and proportions, and commensurations of things with things, which make the measure full and equal. For he does not always keep a good conscience who keeps only the words of a divine law, but the proportions also and the reasons of it, the similitudes and correspondences in like instances, are the measures of conscience.

22. The whole measure and rule of conscience is, the law of God, or God’s will, signified to us by nature, or revelation ; and by the several manners and times and parts of its communication it hath obtained several names : the law of nature,—the consent of nations,—right reason,—the decalogue,—the sermon of Christ,—the canons of the apostles,—the laws ecclesiastical and civil of princes and governors,—fame, or the public reputation of things, expressed by proverbs and other instances and measures of public honesty. This is

Οἰδεῖς τό γέ αἰσχυνόν, κανόνι τοῦ καλοῦ μαθάν.

So Euripides^m calls it, all the rule that teaches us good or evil. These being the full measures of right and wrong, of lawful and unlawful, will be the rule of conscience, and the subject of the present books.

In order to Practice.

23. In this, conscience differs from knowledge, which is in order to speculation, and ineffective notices. And it differs from faith, because although faith is also in order to practice, yet not directly and immediately : it is a collection of propositions, the belief of which makes it necessary to live well, and reasonable, and chosen. But before the propositions of faith pass into action, they must be transmitted through another principle, and that is conscience. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and our Lord, and our Master, is a proposition of faith, and from thence, if we pass on to practice, we first take in another proposition ; ‘ If he be our Lord, where is his fear ?’—and this is a sentence, or virtual proposition, of conscience. And from hence we may

^m Hecub. 600. Priestley’s edition of Euripides, vol. 1. p. 87.

understand the full meaning of the word ‘conscience.’ *Συνειδησις*, and ‘conscientia,’ and so our English word conscience, have in them science or knowledge: the seat of it is the understanding, the act of it is knowing, but there must be a knowing of more together.

24. Hugo de St. Victore says, that “*conscientia est cordis scientia*,” “conscience is the knowledge of the heart.” It is so, but certainly this was not the *έπιμον* and ‘original’ of the word. But there is truth in the following period. “*Cor noscit et alia. Quando autem se noscit, appellatur conscientia; quando, præter se, alia noscit, appellatur scientia:*” “Knowledge hath for its object any thing without; but when the heart knows itself, then it is conscience.”—So it is used in authors sacred and profane. “*Nihil mihi conscius sum,*” saith St. Paul; “I know nothing by myself;”—“*ut alios lateas; tute tibi conscius eris:*” and

· hic murus aheneus esto,
Nil concire sibi.

So Cicero^m to Marcus Rutilius uses it; “*Cum et mihi conscius essem, quanti te facerem;*” “When I myself was conscious to myself, how much I did value thee.”—But this acception of the word conscience is true, but not full and adequate; for it only signifies conscience as it is a witness, not as a guide. Therefore it is more reasonable which Aquinas and the schoolmen generally use: that conscience is a conjunction of the universal practical law with the particular moral action: and so it is ‘*scientia cum rebus facti*,’ and then it takes in that which is called *συντήρησις*, or the general ‘repository’ of moral principles or measures of good, and the particular cases as reduced to practice. Such as was the case of St. Peter, when he denied his Lord: he knew that he ought not to have done it, and his conscience being sufficiently taught his duty to his Lord, he also knew that he had done it, and then there followed a remorse, a biting, or gnawing of his spirit, grief, and shame, and a consequent weeping: when all these acts meet together, it is the full process of conscience.

(1.) The *συντήρησις* or the first act of conscience, St. Jerome calls ‘*scintillam conscientiae*,’ ‘the spark’ or fire put into the heart of man.

(2.) The *συνειδησις*, which is specifically called ‘conscience’ of the deed done, is the bringing fuel to this fire.

^m Ad Divers. xiii. 8. Cortii, p. 674.

(3.) And when they are thus laid together, they will either shine or burn, acquit or condemn. But this complication of acts is conscience. The first is science, practical science : but annex the second ; or it and the third, and then it is conscience. When David's heart smote him, that is, upon his adultery and murder, his conscience thus discoursed : ' Adultery and murder are high violations of the divine law, they provoke God to anger, without whom I cannot live, whose anger is worse than death.' This is practical knowledge, or the principles of conscience ; but the following acts made it up into conscience. For he remembered that he had betrayed Uriah and humbled Bathsheba, and then he begs of God for pardon ; standing condemned in his own breast, he hopes to be forgiven by God's sentence. But the whole process of conscience is in two practical syllogisms, in which the method is ever this. The *συντήρησις* or 'repository' of practical principles begins, and where that leaves, the conscience or the witness and judge of moral actions begins, like Jacob laying hold upon his elder brother's heel. The first is this : .

Whatsoever is injurious ought not to be done :

But to commit adultery is injurious :

Therefore it ought not to be done :

This is the rule of conscience, or the first act of conscience as it is a rule and a guide, and is taken for the *συντήρησις*, or practical 'repository.' But when an action is done or about to be done, conscience takes the conclusion of the former syllogism, and applies it to her particular case.

Adultery ought not to be done :

This action I go about, or which I have done, is adultery :

Therefore it ought not to be done, or to have been done.

This is the full proceeding of this court ; after which many consequent solemnities and actions do pass, of sentence, and preparatory torments and execution.

25. But this I am to admonish, that although this which I have thus defined, is the proper and full sense of the word 'conscience' according to art and proper acceptation, yet in Scriptureⁿ it is used indifferently for an act of conscience, or any of its parts, and does not always signify in its latitude and integrity, but yet it all tends to the same signification ; and though the name be given to the faculty, to the habit, to

ⁿ Acts, xxiii. 1. xxiv. 16. Rom. xiii. 5. 1 Cor. viii. 10. 1 Tim. i. 5. 19. iii. 19. 2 Tim. i. 3. Titus, i. 15. 1 Pet. ii. 19. iii. 16. Heb. xiii. 18.

the act, to the object, to the effect, to every emanation from the mind in things practical, yet still it supposes the same thing: viz., that conscience is the guide of all our moral actions; and by giving the name to so many acts and parts and effluxes from it, it warrants the definition of it, when it is united in its own proper and integral constitution.

To conduct all our Relations and Intercourses between God, our Neighbours, and ourselves: that is, in all moral Actions.

26. This is the final cause of conscience: and by this it is distinguished from prudence, which is also a practical knowledge, and reduced to particular and circumstantiate actions. But, 1. Prudence consists in the things of the world, or relative to the world; conscience in the things of God, or relating to him. 2. Prudence is about affairs as they are of advantage or disadvantage: conscience is employed about them, as they are honest or dishonest. 3. Prudence regards the circumstances of actions, whether moral or civil: conscience only regards moral actions in their substance or essential proprieties. 4. Prudence intends to do actions dexterously and prosperously; conscience is to conduct them justly and according to the commandment. 5. There are many actions in which prudence is not at all concerned, as being wholly indifferent to this or that for matter of advantage; but there is no action but must pass under the file and censure of conscience; for if we can suppose any action in all its circumstances to be wholly indifferent to good or bad; yet none is so to lawful or unlawful, the very indifferent being therefore lawful because it is indifferent, and therefore to be considered by conscience, either actually or habitually: for in this sense even our natural actions, in their time and place, are also moral; and where they are not primarily moral, yet they come under conscience, as being permitted, and innocent; but wherever they are relative to another person, they put on some degrees of morality, and are of proper cognizance in this court.

Qui didicit, patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis;
 Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hospes;
 Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium; quæ
 Partes in bellum missi ducis: ille profecto
 Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique^o.

^o Horat. de Arte Poet. 315. Schelle, p. 41.

That is the full effect of conscience, to conduct all our relations, all our moral actions.

RULE II.

The Duty and Offices of Conscience are to dictate, and to testify or bear Witness; to accuse or excuse; to loose or bind.

I. THE first and last are the direct acts and offices of conscience: the other are reflex or consequent actions, but direct offices. The first act, which is

To dictate,

Is that which divines call the *συντήρησις*, or the ‘phylacter,’ the keeper of the records of the laws, as by it we are taught our duty: God having written it in our hearts by nature and by the Spirit, leaves it there, ever placed before the eye of conscience, as St. Bernard calls it, to be read and used for directions in all cases of dispute of question or action: this is that which St. Paul^p calls “the work of the law written in our hearts;” and therefore it is, that to sin against our conscience is so totally inexcusable, and according to the degree of that violence, which is done against the conscience, puts on degrees. For conscience dictates whatsoever it is persuaded of, and will not suffer a man to do otherwise than it suggests and tell us :

Ἄν γὰρ πῶς αὐτὸν με μίνος καὶ Θυμὸς ἀνέιν
"Ωμ' ἀποταμύμενον κρία ἔδμεναι"

said Achilles^q of Hector when he was violently angry with him: “ I would my conscience would give me leave to eat thy very flesh.”

2. Its universal dictates are ever the most certain, and those are the first principles of justice and religion; and whatsoever else can be infallibly and immediately inferred from thence, are her dictates also, but not primely and directly, but transmitted by the hands of reason. The same reason also there is in clear revelation. For whatsoever is put into the conscience immediately by God, is placed there

^p Rom. ii. 15.

^q Iliad. x. 316.

to the same purpose, and with the same efficiency and persuasion, as is all that which is natural. And the conscience properly dictates nothing else, but prime natural reason, and immediate revelation ; whatsoever comes after these two, is reached forth to us by two hands, one whereof alone is ministered by conscience. The reason is this : because all that law by which God governs us, is written in our hearts, put there by God immediately, that is antecedently to all our actions ; because it is that by which all our actions are to be guided, even our discoursings and arguings are to be guided by conscience, if the argument be moral : now the ways by which God speaks to us immediately, are only nature and the Spirit : nature is that principle which taught all men from the beginning until now ; all that prime practical reason which is perfective of human nature, and in which all mankind agrees. Either the perfections, or the renovations, or the superadditions, to this are taught us by the Holy Spirit, and all this being written in the conscience by the finger of God, is brought forth upon all occasions of action ; and whatsoever is done against any thing so placed, is directly and violently against the conscience : but when from thence reason spins a longer thread, and draws it out from the clue of natural principles or express revelation, that also returns upon the conscience, and is placed there as light upon a wall, but not as the stones that are there : but yet whatever is done against that light, is also against conscience, but not so as the other. Just as it is in nature and accident. To eat poison and filthiness is against every man's health and stomach ; but if by an *ἰδιοτύχεσσια*, ‘a propriety of temper’ or an evil habit, or accidental inordination, wine, or fish, makes a man sick, then these are against his nature too, but not so as poison is, or stones. Whatever comes in the conscience primarily, or consequently, right or wrong, is brought forth upon occasion of action, and is part of her dictate : but as a man speaks some things of his own knowledge, some things by hearsay ; so does conscience ; some things she tells from God and herself, some things from reason and herself, or other accidental notices : those and these do integrate and complete her sermons, but they have several influence and obligation according to their proper efficiency. But of this I shall give full accounts in the second book.

To testify.

3. Conscience bears witness of our actions; so St. Paul^r, “their conscience bearing witness;” and in this sense, conscience is a practical memory. For as the practical knowledge or notices subjected in the understanding, makes the understanding to be conscience; so the actions of our life, recorded in the memory and brought forth to practical judgments, change the memory also into conscience. Τοῦ γὰρ γένους τῶν ἀνθρώπων ταύτη διαφέροντος τῶν ἄλλων ζώων, ὃ μόνοις αὐτοῖς μέτεστι νοῦ καὶ λογισμοῦ· φανερὸν, ὡς οὐκ εἰκὸς ταραχτρέχειν αὐτοὺς τὴν τροειρημένην διαφορὰν, καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ἀλλ’ ἐπισημαίνεσθαι τὸ γιγνόμενον, καὶ δυσαρεστεῖσθαι τοῖς ταροῦσι. “Man differing from brute beasts by the use of reason, it is not likely he should be a stranger to his own actions as the beasts are: but that the evil which is done, should be recalled to their mind with the signification of some displeasure.” So Polybius^s discourses of the reason and the manner of conscience.

4. Every knowing faculty is the seat of conscience; and the same faculty, when it is furnished with speculative notions, retains its natural and proper name of understanding, or memory; but as the same is instructed with notices in order to judgments practical, so it takes the Christian name of conscience. The volitive or choosing faculty cannot, but the intellectual may. And this is that book, which at doomsday shall be brought forth and laid open to all the world. The memory, changed into conscience, preserves the notices of some things, and shall be reminded of others, and shall do that work entirely and perfectly, which now it does imperfectly and by parts, according to the words of St. Paul^t; “then shall we know as we are known,” that is, as God knows us now, so then shall we see and know ourselves. “Nullum theatrum virtuti conscientia majus^u,” shall then be highly verified. Our conscience will be the great scene or theatre, upon which shall be represented all our actions good and bad. It is God’s book, the book of life or death. According to the words of St. Bernard^x; “Ex his, quæ scripta erunt in libris nostris, judicabimur; et ideo scribi debent secundum exemplar libri vitae, et si sic scripti non sunt, saltem corrigendi

^r Rom. ii. 15.^s Lib. 6. Schweig. ii. 465.^t 1 Cor. xiii. 12.^u Cicero 2. c. 25. Tuscul. Rath. p. 202.^x De Inter. Dom. lib. 2. cap. ult.

sunt:” “ We shall be judged by that which is written in our own books” (the books of conscience); “ and therefore they ought to be written according to the copy of the book of life; and if they be not so written, yet they ought to be so corrected.”

5. Consequently to these the conscience does

Accuse or Excuse.

So St. Paul^y joins them as consequent to the former; “ their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts in the meantime accusing or excusing one another.”—“ Si optimorum consiliorum atque factorum testis in omni vita nobis conscientia fuerit, sine ullo metu summa cum honestate vivemus^z:” “ If our conscience be the witness that in our life we do good deeds, and follow sober counsels, we shall live in great honesty and without fear.”—Δικαιοτὴν Θεὸς ἐπέστησε τὸν δικαιότατον ἄμα καὶ οἰκείότατον, τὸ συνειδὸς αὐτὸν, καὶ τὸν ὄρθον λόγον, said Hierocles^a; “ God hath constituted a most righfeous and domestic judge, the conscience and right reason:” Καὶ αὐτὸν ἔσωτῷ, ὃν πάντων μάλιστα αἰδεῖσθαι προεπαιδεύθημεν, “ Every man ought most of all to fear himself, because it is impossible but we should know what we have done amiss; and it concerns us also to make righteous judgment, for we cannot escape ourselves.”—Μηδέποτε μηδὲν αἰσχρὸν ποιήσας ἔλπιζε λήσειν καὶ γὰρ ἀν τοὺς ἄλλους λάθης, σαυτῷ γε συνειδήσεις, said Isocrates^b: “ Etsi à cæteris silentium est, tamen ipse sibimet conscius est posse se merito increpari,” so Apuleius renders it. “ Though others hold their peace, yet there is one within that will not.”

Nec facile est placidam ac pacatam degere vitam,
Qui violat facteis communia fœdera pacis.
Etsi fallit enim Divom genus humanumque,
Perpetuo tamen id fore clam diffidere debet^c.

It is hard to be concealed from God and man too, and although we think ourselves safe for a while, yet we have something within that tells us, οὐκ ἔστι λάθρα τι ποιοῦντα, he that does any thing is espied, and cannot do it privately. ‘ Qui cum in tenebris?’ was the old proverb: ‘ Who was with you in the dark?’—And therefore it was that Epicurus affirmed it to be impossible for a man to be concealed always. Upon

^y Rom. ii. 15.

^a Needham, p. 158.

^c Lucretius. v. 1155. Eichstadt, p. 242.

^z Cicero pro Cluentio.

^b Lange, p. 5.

the mistake of which he was accused by Plutarch and others, to have supposed it lawful to do any injustice secretly; whereas his design was to obstruct that gate of iniquity, and to make men believe that even that sin which was committed most secretly, would some time or other be discovered and brought to punishment; all which is to be done by the extra-regular events of providence, and the certain accusations and discoveries of conscience.

6. For conscience is the looking-glass of the soul, so it was called by Periphanes in Plautus^c;

Non oris causa modo homines æquum fuit
Sibi habere speculum, ubi os contemplarent suum;
Sed, qui perspicere possent cor, sapientia,
Igitur perspicere ut possint cordis copiam.
Ubi id inspexissent, cogitarent postea,
Vitam ut vixissent olim in adolescentia.

And a man looking into his conscience, instructed with the word of God, its proper rule, is by St. James^d compared to “a man beholding his natural face in a glass;” and that the Apostle describes conscience in that similitude, is to be gathered from the word ἔμφυτον λόγον, ‘verbum insitum,’ ‘the ingrafted word,’ the word of God written in our hearts,—which whoso looks on, and compares his actions with his rule, may see what he is: but he that neglects this word and follows not this rule, did indeed see his face, but hath forgotten what manner of man he was, that is, what he was framed in the works of the new creation, when he was newly formed and “created unto righteousness and true holiness.”

7. This accusation and watchfulness, and vocal, clamorous guards of conscience, are in perpetual attendance, and though they may sleep, yet they are quickly awakened, and make the evil man restless. Τοὺς ἀδικοῦντας καὶ ταρανομοῦντας ἀθλίως καὶ τεριφόεσσι ζῆν τὸν τάντα χρόνον, ὅτι κανὸν λαθεῖν δύνανται, τίστιν τερὶ τοῦ λαθεῖν λαθεῖν ἀδύνατόν ἐστι. ὅτεν δὲ τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰτίος ἐγκείμενος οὐκ ἐξ χαίρειν, οὔτε θαρρεῖν ἐπὶ τοῖς ταραζοῦσι, said Epicurus^e; which is very well^f rendered by Seneca, “ Ideo non prodest latere latentibus, quia latendi

^c In Epidico. act. 3. sc. 3. 1. Schmieder, p. 294.

^d James, i. 21. 23, 24.

^e Diog. Laert.

In the passage, which is quoted by Bishop Taylor, Seneca does not so much render as comment upon Epicurus: the words of Seneca are, “Eleganter itaque ab Epicuro dictum puto, ‘Potest nocenti contingere ut lateat, latendi fides non potest.’ Aut si hoc modo melius hunc explicari posse judicas sensum;— Ideo non prodest latere peccantibus, quia latendi etiam si felicitatem habent, fiduciam non habent.” Seneca, ep. 97. Rubkops, vol. 8. p. 246.—(J. R. P.)

etiam si felicitatem habent, fiduciam non habent :” “They that live unjustly, always live miserably and fearfully; because although their crime be secret, yet they cannot be confident that it shall be so :” meaning, that because their conscience does accuse them, they perceive they are discovered, and pervious to an eye, which what effect it will have in the publication of the crime here and hereafter, is not matter of knowledge, but cannot choose but be matter of fear for ever.

— fiet adulter
 Publicus, et p̄nas metuet, quascunque mariti
 Exigere irati ; nec erit felicior astro
 Martis, ut in laqueos nunquam incidat^e.

If any chance makes the fact private, yet no providence or watchfulness can give security, because within there dwells a principle of fear that can never die, till repentance kills it. And therefore Chilo in Laertius said upon this account, that ‘ loss is rather to be chosen than filthy gain ; because that loss brings sorrow but once, but injustice brings a perpetual fear and pain.’

Anne magis Siculi gemuerunt æra juvenci,
 Aut magis auratis pendens laquearibus ensis
 Purpureas subter cervices terruit, *Imus*
Imus præcipites, quam si sibi dicat, et intus
 Palleat infelix, quod proxima nesciat uxor^f?

The wife that lies by his side, knows not at what the guilty man looks pale, but something that is within the bosom knows; and no pompousness of condition can secure the man, and no witty cruelty can equal the torment. For that also, although it be not directly the office of conscience, yet it is the act and effect of conscience; when itself is injured, it will never let any thing else be quiet.

To loose or bind,

8. Is the reflex act of conscience. Upon viewing the records, or the *συντήρησις*, the legislative part of conscience, it binds to duty; upon viewing the act, it binds to punishment, or consigns to comfort; and in both regards it is called by Origen, “affectuum corrector, atque animæ paedagogus,” “the corrector of the affections, and the teacher of the soul.”— Which kind of similitude Epictetus, in Stobæus, followed

^e Juven. Sat. 10. 311. Ruperti, p. 176.

^f Pers. Sat. 3. 39. Koenig. p. 41.

also ; “ Parentes pueros nos paedagogi tradiderunt, qui ubique observaret ne laederemur; Deus autem clam viros insitae conscientiae custodiens tradidit; quæ quidem custodia ne-quaquam contemnenda est;” “ As our parents have delivered us to a guardian, who did watch lest we did or suffered mischief; so hath God committed us to the custody of our conscience that is planted within us: and this custody is at no hand to be neglected.”

9. The binding to duty is so an effect of conscience, that it cannot be separated from it; but the binding to punishment is an act of conscience also as it is a judge, and is intended to affright a sinner, and to punish him: but it is such a punishment as is the beginning of hell-torments, and unless the wound be cured, will never end till eternity itself shall go into a grave.

Illo nocens se damnat quo peccat die^a.

“ The same day that a man sins, on the same day he is condemned; and when Menelaus in the tragedy did ask,

Tίχενης πάσχεις; τίς σ' ἀπόλλυσιν νέος;

What disease killed poor Orestes? he was answered,

Ἡξύεσσι, ὅτι σύνοιδα δεῖν εἰργασμένος^b.

His disease was nothing but an evil conscience; he had done vile things, and had an amazed spirit that distracted him, and so he died. ‘ Curas ultrices’ Virgil^c calls the wounds of an evil conscience, ‘ revenging cares.’—“ Nihil est miserius quam animus hominis conscius,” said he in the comedy^d; “ Nothing is more miserable than an evil conscience:” and the being pained with it is called *τῷ συνειδότι ἀπάγχεσθαι*, ‘ to be choked or strangled’ with an evil conscience, by St. Chrysostom, who, in his twenty-second homily upon the First Epistle to the Corinthians, speaks much and excellently to the same purpose: and there are some that fancy this was the cause of Judas’s death; the horrors of his conscience were such, that his spirits were confounded, and restless, and uneasy; and striving to go from their prison, stopped at the gates of emanation, and stifled him. It did that, or as bad; it either choked him, or brought him to a halter, as it hath

^a Apud Publum. ^b Euripid. Orest. 389.—Priestley’s edition, vol. 1. p. 265.
^c Aeu. 6. 224 ^d Plautus.

done many besides him. And although I may truly say, as he did,

Non mihi si linguae centum ——
Omnia poenarum percurrere nomina possem¹,

No tongue is able to express the evils which are felt by a troubled conscience, or a wounded spirit; yet the heads of them are visible and notorious to all men.

10. (1.) The first is that which Nazianzen calls *τὰς ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῖς δεινοῖς ἔξαγορεύσεις*, ‘accusations and vexings of a man when he is in misery;’ then when he needs most comfort, he shall by his evil conscience be most disquieted. A sickness awakes a dull sleeping conscience, and when it is awakened it will make that the man shall not sleep. So Antiochus^m when his lieutenant Lysias was beaten by the Jews, he fell sick with grief, and then his conscience upbraided him; “but now” (said he) “I remember the evils that I did at Jerusalem; ‘quia invenerunt me mala ista’ (so the Latin Bible reads it); ‘because those evils now have found me out.’” For when a man is prosperous, it is easy for him to stop the mouth of conscience, to bribe it or abuse it, to fill it with noise, and to divert it with business, to outvie it with temporal gaieties, or to be flattered into weak opinions and sentences: but when a man is smitten of God, and divested of all the outsides and hypocrisies of sin, and that conscience is disentangled from its fetters and foolish pretensions, then it speaks its own sense, it ever speaks loudest when the man is poor, or sick, or miserable. This was well explicated by St. Ambrose; “Dum sumus in quadam delinquendi libidine, nebulis quibusdam conscientiae mens obducitur, ne videat eorum, quae concupiscit, deformitatem: sed cum omnis nebula transierit, gravia tormenta exercentur in quadam male consci secretario.” “A man is sometimes so surprised with the false fires and glarings of temptation, that he cannot see the secret turpitude and deformity. But when the cloud and veil are off, then comes the tormentor from within:”

· acuuntque metum mortalibus ægris,
Si quando letum horrificum morbosque Deum Rex
Molitur, meritas aut bello territat urbesⁿ,

Then the calamity swells, and conscience increases the trou-

¹ Æn. 6.

^m Macc. vi. 12.

ⁿ Æneid. 12. 852

ble, when God sends war, or sickness, or death. It was Saul's case : when he lost that fatal battle in which the ark was taken, he called to the Amalekite, "Sta super me et interfice me," "Fall upon me and slay me;" "Quoniam tenent me angustiae," "I am in a great strait."—He was indeed ; for his son was slain, and his army routed, and his enemies were round about : but then conscience stepped in, and told him of the evil that he had done in causing fourscore of the Lord's priests to be slain ; and therefore Abulensis reads the words thus, "Fall upon me and slay me," "Quoniam tenent me oræ vestimenti sacerdotalis," "I am entangled in the fringes of the priests' garments."—"Videbatur sibi Saul, quod propinquus morti videret sacerdotes Dei accusantes eum in judicio coram Deo :" "He thought he saw the priests of the Lord accusing him before God."—And this hath been an old opinion of the world, that, in the days of their calamity, wicked persons are accused by those whom they have injured . Not much unlike to which is that of Plato, describing the torments of wicked souls : Βοῶτι τε καὶ καλοῦσιν, οἱ μὲν οὓς ἀπέκτειναν, οἱ δὲ, οὓς ὑφεισαν καλέσαντες δ' ἵκετεύουσι τοὺς ἡδικημένους δοῦναι σφισι συγγνάμνη, "They roar and cry out ; some calling on them whom they killed, some on those they have calumniated ; and calling they pray them whom they have injured, to give them pardon." Then every bush is a wild beast, and every shadow is a ghost, and every glow-worm is a dead man's candle, and every lantern is a spirit.

— pallidumque visa
Matris lampade respicis Neronem^p.

When Nero was distressed, he saw his mother's taper, and grew pale with it.

11. (2.) The second effect is shame, which conscience never fails to inflict secretly, there being a secret turpitude and baseness in sin, which cannot be better expressed than by its opposition and contradiction to conscience. Conscience when it is right, makes a man bold ; "Qui ambulat simpliciter, ambulat confidenter ;" "He that walks honestly, walks confidently," because he hath innocence and he hath reason on

^o Bp. Taylor seems to have quoted from memory : the original passage runs thus ; Ἐνταῦθα βοῶτι τε, καὶ καλοῦσιν, οἱ μὲν οὓς ἀπέκτειναν, οἱ δὲ, οὓς ὑφεισαν καλέσαντες δ' ἵκετεύουσι, καὶ δίονται, ἕποσι σφᾶς ἱκέτηναι εἰς τὴν λίμνην, καὶ διέζασθαι. Fischer, p. 481, (J. R. P.)

^p Statius, *Sylv.* 2. 7. 118. Bipont. p. 61.

his side. But he that sins, sins against reason, in which the honour and the nobleness of a man consist; and therefore shame must needs come in the destitution of them. For as by reason men naturally rule, so when they are fallen from it, unless by some accidental courages they be supported, they fall into the state of slaves and sneaking people. And upon this account it was that Plato said, “*Si scirem Deos mihi condonaturos, et homines ignoraturos, adhuc peccare erubescerem propter solam peccati turpitudinem:*” “If I were sure God would pardon me, and men would not know my sin, yet I should be ashamed to sin, because of its essential baseness.”—The mistresses of our vile affections are so ugly we cannot endure to kiss them but through a veil, either the veil of excuse, or pretence, or darkness; something to hide their ugliness; and yet even these also are so thin that the filthiness and shame are not hid. “*Bona conscientia turbam advocat, mala autem in solitudine anxia atque solicita est,*” said Seneca. An evil conscience is ashamed of light, and afraid of darkness; and therefore nothing can secure it. But being ashamed before judges, and assemblies, it flies from them into solitudes; and when it is there, the shame is changed into fear, and therefore from thence it runs abroad into societies of merry criminals, and drinking sanctuaries; which is nothing but a shutting the eyes, and hiding the head, while the body is exposed to a more certain danger. It cannot be avoided: it was and is and will eternally be true, “*Perjurii pœna divina exitium; humana dedecus.*^p” Which St. Paul perfectly renders, “the things whereof ye are now ashamed; the end of those things is death^q.” Death is the punishment which God inflicts, and shame is that which comes from man.

12. (3). There is another effect which cannot be well told by him that feels it, or by him that sees it, what it is: because it is a thing without limit and without order. It is a distraction of mind, indeterminate, divided thoughts, flying every thing, and pursuing nothing. It was the case of Nebuchadnezzar, *οἱ διαλογίσμοὶ αὐτοῦ διετάρασσον αὐτὸν, ‘his thoughts troubled him’* “*Varios vultus, disparilesque sensus,*” like the sophisters who in their pursuit of vain-glory

^p Cicero de Legib. lib. 2. c. ix. Wagner, p. 55.

^r A. Gell. lib. 5. c. 1.

^q Rom. vi. 21.

displeased the people, and were hissed from their pulpits ; nothing could amaze them more ; they were troubled like men of a disturbed conscience. The reason is, they are fallen into an evil condition, which they did not expect ; they are abused in their hopes, they are fallen into a sad state of things, but they know not what it is, nor where they are, nor whither it will bear them, nor how to get out of it. This indeed is commonly the first part of the great evil ; shame goes along with the sin, in the very acting it, but as soon as it is acted, then begins this confusion ;

— nefas tandem incipiunt sentire, peractis
Crimibus —^r,

they thought of nothing but pleasure before ; but as soon as they have finished, then they begin to taste the wormwood and the coloquintida : “ perfecto demum scelere, magnitudo ejus intellecta est,” said Tacitus^s. While they were doing it, they thought it little, or they thought it none, because their fancy and their passion ruled ; but when that is satisfied and burst with a filthy plethora, then they understand how great their sin is, but are distracted in their thoughts, for they understand not how great their calamity shall be.

Occultum quāiente animo tortore flagellum^t,

the secret tormentor shakes the mind, and dissolves it into indiscrimination and confusion. The man is like one taken in a lie, or surprised in a shameful act of lust, or theft ; at first he knows not what to say, or think, or do, and his spirits huddle together, and fain would go somewhere, but they know not whither, and do something, but they know not what.

13. This confusion and first amazement of the conscience in some vile natures, and baser persons, proceeds to impudence, and hardness of face.

— frontemque à crimine sumunt.

When they are discovered, they rub their foreheads hard, and consider it cannot be worse, and therefore in their way they make the best of it ; that is, they will not submit to the judgment of conscience, nor suffer her infliction, but take the for-

^r Juv. 18. 289. Ruperti. ^s Annal. 14. 10. Ruperti, p. 369.
^t Juv. 18. 195.

tune of the banditti, or of an outlaw, rather than by the rule of subjects suffer the penalty of the law, and the severity of the judge. But conscience hath no hand in this, and whatsoever of this nature happens, it is in despite of conscience; and if it proceeds upon that method, it goes on to obstinacy, hardness of heart, a resolution never to repent, a hatred of God, and reprobation. For if conscience be permitted to do its work, this confusion when it comes to be stated, and that the man hath time to consider it, passes on to fear; and that is properly the next effect.

14. (4.) An evil or a guilty conscience is disposed for fear; shame and fear cannot be far asunder:

"Ἐνθα δίος, ἵνταῦθα κ' αἰδώς".

Sin makes us ashamed before men, and afraid of God: an evil conscience makes man a coward, timorous as a child in a church-porch at midnight; it makes the strongest men to tremble like the keepers of the house of an old man's tabernacle.

'Ο συνιστορῶν αὐτῷ τι, καὶν οὐ θρούγκωτος,
'Η σύνσοις αὐτὸν δειλότατον εἶναι πάσιν,

said Menander^x. No strength of body, no confidence of spirit, is a defensive against an evil conscience, which will intimidate the courage of the most perfect warrior.

Qui terret, plus iste timet: sors ista tyrannis
Convenit: invicunt claris, fortisque trucidant,
Muniti gladiis vivant septique venenis,
Ancipites habeant artes, trepidique minentur.

So Claudian^y describes the state of tyrants and injurious persons; 'they do evil and fear worse, they oppress brave men, and are afraid of mean fellows; they are encompassed with swords, and dwell amongst poisons, they have towers with back-doors and many outlets; and they threaten much, but themselves are most afraid.' We read of Belshazzar, his knees beat against each other upon the arrest made on him by the hand on the wall, which wrote the sentence of God in a strange character, because he would not read the writing in his conscience. This fear is very great and very lasting,

^x Epicharm.

^y De 1. Honor. Consol. 290. Gesner, vol. 1. p. 106.

^x Clerici, p. 216.

even in this world: and is rarely well described by Lucretius²:

Cerberus et Furiæ ——

— neque sunt usquam, nec possunt esse, profecto :
Sed metus in vita pœnarum pro male facteis
Est insignibus insignis; scelerisque luela
Carcer, et horribilis de saxo jactus eorum,
Verbera, carnufices, robur, pix, lamina, tedæ ;
Quæ tamen et si absunt, at mens sibi concia facteis,
Præmetuens, adhibet stimulus, torretque flagelleis.

Which description of the evil and intolerable pains and fears of conscience is exceeded by the author of the Wisdom of Solomon³, “ Indisciplinatae animæ erraverunt.” That is the ground of their misery; “ The souls were refractory to discipline, and have erred. They oppress the holy nation.”— The effect was, “ they became prisoners of darkness, and fettered with the bands of a long night; ‘ fugitivi perpetuae providentiæ jacuerunt,’ ‘ they became outlaws from the divine providence.’ And while they supposed to lie hid in their secret sins, they were scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness; ‘ paventes horrende, et cum admiratione nimia perturbati,’ ‘ they did fear horribly, and disturbed with a wonderful amazement.’ For neither might the corner that held them, keep them from fear, but a sound descending did trouble them; ‘ et personæ tristes apparentes pavorem illis præstabant,’ ‘ sad apparitions did affright them:’ a fire appeared to them very formidable; ‘ et timore percussi ejus quæ non videbatur faciei;’ ‘ they were affrighted with the apprehensions of what they saw not:’ and all the way in that excellent description, there is nothing but fear and affrightment, horrid amazement and confusion; ‘ pleni timore,’ and ‘ tremebundi peribant,’ ‘ full of fear, and they perished trembling;’ and then follows the philosophy and rational account of all this. “ Frequenter enim præoccupant pessima, redargente conscientia.” “ When their conscience reproves them, they are possessed with fearful expectations.” For wickedness condemned by her own witness is very timorous: “ Cum enim sit timida nequitia, dat testimonium condemnata:” “ Conscience gives witness and gives sentence: and when wickedness is condemned, it is full of affrightment.” For fear is ‘ præsumptionis adjutorium,’ the alloy of confidence and presumption, and the

² Lucretius, 8. 1024. Eichstadt, p. 137.

³ Wisd. xvii.

promoter of its own apprehensions, and betrays the succours that reason yields. For indeed in this case, no reason can dispute a man out of his misery, for there is nothing left to comfort the conscience, so long as it is divested of its innocence. The prophet Jeremy^b instances this in the case of Pashur, who oppressed the prophets of the Lord, putting them in prison, and forbidding them to preach in the name of the Lord : “ Thy name shall be no more called ‘ Pashur’ but ‘ Magor Missabib,’ that is, ‘ fear round about;’ for I will make thee a terror unto thyself.”

15. This fear of its own nature is apt to increase: for indeed it may be infinite.

Nec videt interea, qui terminus esse malorum
Possit, qui ve sicut pœnaru[m] denique finis:
Atque eadem metuit magis, hæc ne in morte gravescant:
Hinc Acherusia fit stultorum denique vitæ.

He that fears in this case, knows not the greatness and measure of the evil which he fears; it may arrive to infinite, and it may be any thing, and it may be every thing:—and therefore there is,

16. (5.) An appendant perpetuity and restlessness; a man of an evil conscience is never at quiet. “ Impietas enim malum infinitum est, quod nunquam extingui potest,” said Philo^d: he is put to so many shifts to excuse his crime before men, and cannot excuse it to God or to himself, and then he is forced to use arts of forgetfulness, that he may not remember his sorrow; he runs to weakness for excuse, and to sin for a comfort, and to the methods and paths of hell for sanctuary, and rolls himself in his uneasy chains of fire, and changes from side to side upon his gridiron, till the flesh drop from the bones on every side. This is the poet’s vulture^e,

Immortale jecur tundens, fœcundaque pœnis
Viscera, rimaturque epulis, habitatque sub alto
Pectore; nec fibris requies datur ulla renatis.

It gnaws perpetually, and consumes not, being like the fire of hell, it does never devour, but torments for ever.

17. (6.) This fear and torment, which are inflicted by conscience, do not only increase at our death, but after death

^b Jer. xx. 3, 4.
^d De Profugis.

^c Lucret. 3. 1038. Eichstadt, p. 138.
^e Virg. Æn. 6. 598.

is the beginning of hell. For these are the fire of hell; ὅδυγάματι ἐν τῇ φλογὶ ταιτη, “ I am tormented in this flame;” so said Dives, when he was in torments; that is, he had the torments of an evil conscience, for hell itself is not to be opened till the day of judgment; but the sharpest pain is usually expressed by fire, and particularly the troubles of mind are so signified. “ Urit animum meum;” “ This burns,” that is, this exceedingly troubles, “ my mind;”—and “ Uro hominem” in the comedy, I vex him sufficiently, “ I burn him;”—“ Loris non ureris,” “ Thou art not tormented with scourgings.”

Pœna autem vehemens, ac multo sævior illis,
Quos et Cædicius gravis invenit et Rhadamanthus,
Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem^f.

This is a part of hell-fire, the smoke of it ascends night and day; and it is a preparatory to the horrible sentence of doomsday, as the being tormented in prison is, to the day of condemnation and execution. The conscience in the state of separation does accuse perpetually, and with an insupportable amazement fears the revelation of the day of the Lord.

Et cum fateri furia jusserit verum,
Prodente clamet conscientiâ, *scriptig.*

‘ The fury within will compel him to confess,’ and then he is prepared for the horrible sentence; as they who upon the rack accuse themselves, and then they are carried to execution. Menippus, in Lucian^h, says that the souls of them that are dead, are accused by the shadows of their bodies. Αὗται τοίνυν, ἐπειδὴν ἀποθάνωμεν, κατηγοροῦσι τε καὶ καταμαρτυροῦσι, καὶ διελέγχουσι τὰ πεπραγμένα ἡμῖν παρὰ τὸν βίον· and these he says are ἀξιόπιστοι, ‘ worthy of belief,’ because they are always present, and never parted from their bodies; meaning, that a man’s conscience, which is inseparable as a shadow, is a strong accuser and a perfect witness: and this will never leave them till it carries them to hell; and then the fear is changed into despair, and indignation, and hatred of God, and eternal blasphemy. This is the full progress of an evil conscience, in its acts of binding.

18. Quest. But if it be inquired by what instrument conscience does thus torment a man, and take vengeance of him

^f Juvenal, 13. 196.

^g Martial, 10. 5. 18. Mattaire, p. 191.

^h Νεκυομαρτία. 2. Bipont. vol. 8. p. 15.

for his sins, whether it hath a proper efficiency in itself, and that it gives torment, as it understands, by an exercise of some natural power; or whether it be by an act of God inflicting it, or by opinion and fancy, by being persuaded of some future events which shall be certainly consequent to the sin, or by religion and belief, or lastly by deception and mere illusion, and upon being affrighted with bugbears:—I answer,

19. That it does or may afflict a man by all these. For its nature is to be inquisitive and busy, querulous and complaining; and to do so is as natural to it, as for a man to be grieved when any thing troubles him. But because men have a thousand little arts to stifle the voice of conscience, or at least that themselves may not hear it; God oftentimes awakens a man by a sudden dash of thunder and lightning, and makes the conscience sick, and troublesome; just as upon other accidents a man is made sad, or hardened, or impudent, or foolish, or restless: and sometimes every dream, or sad story that the man hath heard, the flying of birds, and the hissing of serpents, or the fall of waters, or the beating of a watch, or the noise of a cricket, or a superstitious tale, is suffered to do the man a mischief and to increase his fear.

— Ergo exercentur pœnis, veterumque malorum
Supplicia expenduntⁱ.

This the poets and priests expressed by their Adrastea, Nemesis, Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus: not that these things were real,

— neque sunt usquam, neque possunt esse, profecto,

said one of them; but yet to their pains and fears they gave names, and they put on persons; and a fantastic cause may have a real event, and therefore must come from some further principle: and if an evil man be affrighted with a meteor or a bird, by the chattering of swallows (like the young Greek in Plutarch), or by his own shadow (as Orestes was), it is no sign that the fear is vain, but that God is the author of conscience,—and will, beyond the powers of nature and the arts of concealment, set up a tribunal, and a gibbet, and a rack, in the court of conscience. And therefore we find this

ⁱ Virg. Æn. 6. 789.

evil threatened by God to fall upon sinners. “ They that are left alive of you in the land of your captivity, I will send fainting in their hearts, in the land of their enemy, and ^pthe sound of a leaf shall chase them^k:” and again; “ The Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have no assurance of thy life^l:” and this very fear ends in death itself; it is a mortal fear sometimes: for when the prophet Isaiah^m had told concerning Jerusalem, “ Thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle:” to the inquiry of those who ask, How then were they slain? the answer is made by a learned gloss upon the place? “ Homines hi expectato adventu hostis, velut transfoSSI, exanimantur metu :” “ They were dead with fear, slain with the affrightments of their own conscience, as if they were transfixed by the spear of their enemies.”—“ Quid ergo nos à diis immortalibus divinitus expectemus, nisi irrationalibus finem faciamus,” said Q. Metellus in A. Gelliusⁿ: There is no avoiding punishment unless we will avoid sin; since even a shadow as well as substances may become a Nemesis, when it is let loose by God, and conducted by conscience.

20. But the great instrument of bringing this to pass is that certainty of persuasion which is natural in all men, and is taught to all men, and is in the sanction of all laws expressly affirmed by God, that evil shall be to them that do evil;

Θεοὺς ἀτίχων τις βροτῶν, δώσει δίκην,

“ He that dishonours God, shall not escape punishment:” both in this life,

Ultrix Erinnys impio dignum parat
Letum tyranno ————— ^p

and after this life: for so they reckoned, that adulterers, rebels, and traitors, should be kept in prisons in fearful expectation of horrid pains;

Quique ob adulterium cœsi, quique arma secuti
Impia, nec veriti dominorum fallere dextras,
Inclusi pœnam expectant ————— ^q

^k Levit. xxvi. 36.

^l Deut. xxviii. 65.

^m Isa. xxii. 2.

ⁿ Lib. 1. c. 6.

^o Aeschyl. Suppl. 747. Schulz.

^p Senec. Octav. 620. Schroeder, p. 782.

^q Virg. Aen. 6. 612.

all this is our conscience, which, in this kind of actions and events, is nothing but the certain expectation and fear of the divine vengeance.

21. Quest. But then why is the conscience more afraid in some sins than in others, since in sins of the greatest malignity we find great difference of fear and apprehension, when, because they are of extreme malignity, there can be no difference in their demerit?

22. I answer, Although all sins be damnable, yet not only in the several degrees of sin, but in the highest of all there is great difference: partly proceeding from the divine threatenings, partly from fame and opinion, partly from other causes.

For, (1.) There are some sins which are called ‘peccata clamantia,’ ‘crying sins;’ that is, such which cry aloud for vengeance; such which God not only hath specially threatened with horrid plagues, but such which do seldom escape vengeance in this life, but for their particular mischief are hedged about with thorns, lest by their frequency they become intolerable. Such are sacrilege, oppression of widows and orphans, murder, sodomy, and the like. Now if any man falls into any of these crimes, he sees an angel with a sword drawn stand before him; he remembers the angry words of God, and calls to mind that so few have escaped a severe judgment here, that God’s anger did converse with men, and was clothed with our circumstances, and walked around about us; and less than all this is enough to scare an evil conscience.

But, (2.) There are some certain defensatives and natural guards which God hath placed in men against some sins; such as are, a natural abhorrency against unnatural lusts: a natural pity against murder and oppression: the double hedge of sacredness and religion against sacrilege. He therefore that commits any of these sins, does so much violence to those defensatives, which were placed either in or upon his heart, that such an act is a natural disease, and vexes the conscience, not only by a moral but by a natural instrument.

(3.) There are in these crying sins, certain accidents and appendages of horror, which are apt to amaze a man’s mind: as in murder there is the circumstance and state of death, which when a man sees and feels alone, and sees that him-

self hath acted, it must needs affright him; since naturally most men abhor to be alone with a dead corpse. So also in oppression of widows, a man meets with so many sad spectacles, and hears so many groans, and clamorous complaints, such importunities, and such prayers, and such fearful cursings, and perpetual weepings, that if a man were to use any artifice to trouble a man's spirit, he could not dress his scene with more advantage.

(4.) Fame hath a great influence into this effect, and there cannot easily be a great shame amongst men, but there must be a great fear of vengeance from God; and the same does but antedate the divine anger, and the man feels himself entering into it, when he is enwrapped within the other. A man committing a foul sin, which hath a special dishonour and singular disreputation among men, is like a wolf espied amongst the sheep: the outcry and noises among the shepherds make him fly for his life, when he hears a vengeance coming. And besides in this case, it is a great matter that he perceives all the world hates him for his crime, and that which every one decries, must needs be very hateful and formidable; and prepared for trouble.

(5.) It cannot be denied, but opinion also hath some hand in this affair; and some men are affrighted from their cradle in some instances, and permitted or connived at in others; and the fears of childhood are not shaken from the conscience in old age: as we see the persuasions of childhood in moral actions are permanent, so are the fear and hope which were the sanction and establishment of those persuasions. Education, and society, and country customs, and states of life, and the religion or sect of the man's professing, have influence into their portions of this effect.

23. The consequent of this discourse is this;—that we cannot take any direct accounts of the greatness or horror of a sin by the affrightment of conscience. For it is with the affrightments of conscience as it is in temporal judgments; sometimes they come not at all, and when they do, they come irregularly; and when they do not, the man does not escape. But in some sins God does strike more frequently than in others, and in some sins men usually are more affrighted than in others. The outward judgment and the inward fear are intended to be deletories of sin, and instruments of

repentance; but as some great sins escape the rod of God in this life, so are such sinners oftentimes free from great affrightments. But as he who is not smitten of God, yet knows that he is always liable to God's anger, and if he repents not, it will certainly fall upon him hereafter; so it is in conscience: he that fears not, hath never the less cause to fear, but oftentimes a greater, and therefore is to suspect and alter his condition, as being of a deep and secret danger: and he that does fear, must alter his condition, as being highly troublesome. But in both cases, conscience does the work of a monitor and a judge. In some cases conscience is like an eloquent and a fair-spoken judge, which declaims not against the criminal, but condemns him justly: in others, the judge is more angry, and affrights the prisoner more, but the event is the same. For in those sins where the conscience affrights, and in those in which she affrights not, supposing the sins equal but of differing natures, there is no other difference, but that conscience is a clock,—which in one man strikes aloud and gives warning, and in another the hand points silently to the figure, but strikes not; but by this he may as surely see what the other hears, viz., that his hours pass away, and death hastens, and after death comes judgment.

24. But by the measures of binding, we may judge of the loosing, or absolution, which is part of the judgment of conscience, and this is the greatest pleasure in the world;

Μόνον δὲ τοῦτο φασ' ἀμελλάσθαι βίω,
Τηλέμην δικαιίων κάγαθήν, ὅτῳ παρῆν.

A good conscience is the most certain, clearest, and undisturbed felicity. "Lectulus respersus floribus bona est conscientia, bonis refecta operibus." No bed so soft, no flowers so sweet, so florid, and delicious, as a good conscience, in which springs all that is delectable, all that may sustain and recreate our spirits.—"Nulla re tam lætari soleo quam officiorum meorum conscientia:" "I am pleased in nothing so much as in the remembrances and conscience of my duty," said Cicero. Upon this pillow and on this bed, Christ slept soundly in a storm,—and St. Peter in prison so fast, that the brightness of an angel could not awake him, or make him to

* Hippolyt. 428.—Priestley's edition of Eurip. vol. 3. p. 137.
† 2 Cor. i. 12.

rise up without a blow on the side. This refreshed the sorrows of Hezekiah when he was smitten with the plague, and not only brought pleasure for what was past, and so doubled the good of it,

Vivere bis vita posse priore frui ;
but it also added something to the number of his years,

Ampliat ætatis spatium sibi vir bonus —^t

And this made Paul and Silas sing in prison and in an earthquake; and that I may sum up all the good things in the world, I borrow the expression of St. Bernard, “ *Bona conscientia non solum sufficit ad solatium sed etiam ad coronam :*” It is here a perpetual comfort, it will be hereafter an eternal crown.

25. This very thing Epicurus observed wisely, and in his great design for pleasure, commended justice as the surest instrument to prevent it. So Antiphon : “ *Conscium esse sibi in vita nullius criminis, multum voluptatis parit :*”^u and Cato in Cicero : “ *Conscientia bene actæ vitæ multorumque benefactorum recordatio jucundissima est.*” Nothing is a greater pleasure than a good conscience : for there is peace and no disturbance ; *καρπὸς μέγιστος ἀταραξία* : ‘ quietness is the best fruit ;’ and that grows only upon the tree in the midst of Paradisc, upon the stock of a holy heart or conscience. Only care is to be taken, that boldness be not mistaken for peace, and hardness of heart for a good conscience. It is easy to observe the difference, and no man can be innocently abused in this affair. Peace is the fruit of a holy conscience. But no man can say, ‘ I am at peace, therefore I have a holy conscience.’ But, ‘ I have lived innocently,’ or ‘ I walk carefully with my God, and I have examined my conscience severely, and that accuses me not ; therefore this peace is a holy peace, and no illusion.’ A man may argue thus : ‘ I am in health, and therefore the sleep I take is natural and healthful.’ But not thus : ‘ I am heavy to sleep, therefore I am in health,’ for his dulness may be a lethargy. A man may be quiet, because he inquires not, or because he understands not, or because he cares not, or because he is abused in the notices of his condition. But the true peace of conscience is thus to be discerned.

^t Martial, 10. 23.

^u De Amicit. Wetzcl. c. 3. §. 7. pag. 21.

Signs of true Peace.

(1.) Peace of conscience is a rest after a severe inquiry. When Hezekiah was upon his death-bed as he supposed, he examined his state of life, and found it had been innocent in the great lines and periods of it; and he was justly confident.

(2.) Peace of conscience can never be in wicked persons, of notorious evil lives. It is a fruit of holiness ; and therefore what quietness soever is in persons of evil lives, it is to be attributed to any other cause, rather than innocence ; and therefore is to be called any thing rather than just peace. “ The adulterous woman eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith I have done no wickedness ^{x.} ” And Pilate ‘ washed his hands,’ when he was dipping them in the most innocent, the best and purest, blood of the world. But St. Paul had peace, because he really had ‘ fought a good fight.’ And it is but a fond way to ask a sign how to discern, when the sun shines. If the sun shines we may easily perceive it, and then the beams we see, are the sun-beams ; but it is not a sure argument to say, I see a light, therefore the sun shines ; for he may espy only a tallow-candle, or a glowworm.

(3.) That rest which is only in the days of prosperity, is not a just and a holy peace, but that which is in the days of sorrow and affliction ^{y.} The noise and madness of wine, the transports of prosperity, the forgetfulness of riches, and the voice of flatterers, outcry conscience, and put it to silence ; and there is no reason to commend a woman’s silence and modesty, when her mouth is stopped. But in the days of sorrow, then conscience is vocal, and her muffler is off ;

— Invigilant animo, scelerisque parati
Supplicium exercent curae : tunc plurima versat
Pessimus in dubiis augur timor — ^z

and then a man naturally searches every where for comfort ; and if his heart then condemns him not, it is great odds but it is a holy peace.

(4.) Peace of mind is not to be used as a sign that God hath pardoned our sins, but is only of use in questions of particular fact. ‘ What evils have I done ?, what good have I

^x Prov. xxx. 20.

^y Ecclus. xiii. 26.

^z Statius Theb. iii. 4. Bipont. p. 202.

done? The peace that comes after this examination, is holy and good. But if I have peace in these particulars, then have I peace towards God also, as to these particulars; but whether I have pardon for other sins which I have committed, is another consideration, and is always more uncertain. But even here also a peace of conscience is a blessing that is given to all holy penitents more or less, at some time or other, according as their repentance proceeds, and their hope is exercised: but it is not to be judged of by sense, and ease, but by its proper causes: it never comes but after fear, and labour, and prayers, and watchfulness, and assiduity: and then what succeeds is a blessing, and a fair indication of a bigger.

(5.) True peace of conscience is always joined with a holy fear; a fear to offend, and a fear of the divine displeasure for what we have offended; and the reason is, because all peace that is so allayed, is a peace after inquiry, a peace obtained by just instruments, relying upon proper grounds: it is rational, and holy, and humble; neither carelessness or presumption is in it.

(6.) True peace of conscience relies not upon popular noises, and is not a sleep procured by the tongues of flatterers, or opinions of men, but is a peace from within, relying upon God and its own just measures. It is an excellent discourse which Seneca hath: “*Est aliquando gratus, etiam qui ingratuus videtur, quam mala interpres opinio contrarium traducit. Hic quid aliud sequitur, quam ipsam conscientiam? quæ etiam obruta delectat, quæ concioni ac famæ reclamat, et in se omnia reponit, et quum ingentem ex altera parte turbam contra sentientium aspexit, non numerat suffragia, sed una sententia vincit:*” “Some men are thankful, who yet seem unthankful, being wronged by evil interpretation. But such a man, what else does he follow but his conscience, which pleases him, though it be overborne with slander; and when she sees a multitude of men that think otherwise, she regards not, nor reckons suffrages by the poll, but is victorious by her single sentence.” But the excellency and great effect of this peace he afterward describes; “*Si vero bonam fidem perfidiæ suppliciis affici videt, non descendit è fastigio, sed supra penam suam consistit.—Habeo, inquit, quod volui, quod petui. Non pœnitet, nec pœnitabit, nec ulla iniuriate*

me eo fortuna perducet, ut hanc vocem audiam, Quid mihi volui? quid mihi nunc prodest bona voluntas? Prodest et in equuleo, prodest et in igne. Qui si singulis membris admovetur, et paulatim vivum corpus circumeat; licet ipsum corpus plenum bona conscientia stillet: placebit illi ignis, per quem bona fides collucebit:” “A good conscience loses nothing of its confidence and peace for all the tortures of the world. The rack, the fire, shall not make it to repent and say, What have I purchased? But its excellency and integrity shall be resplendent in the very flames.”—And this is the meaning of the proverb used by the Levantines, ‘Heaven and hell are seated in the heart of man.’ As his conscience is, so he is happy, or extremely miserable. “What other men say of us, is no more than what other men dream of us,” said St. Gregory Nazianzen^b; it is our conscience that accuses or condemns to all real events and purposes.

26. And now all this is nothing but a persuasion partly natural, partly habitual, of this proposition which all the nations, and all the men in the world, have always entertained as the band of all their religion, and private transactions of justice and decency.—“Deum remuneratorem esse,” that “God is a just rewarder” of all actions. I sum up the premises in the words of the orator: “Magna vis est conscientiae, judices, et magna in utramque partem: ut neque timeant qui nihil commiserint; et poenam semper ante oculos versari putent, qui peccarint^c.” On either side conscience is mighty and powerful, to secure the innocent, and to afflict the criminal.

27. But beyond these offices now described, conscience does sometimes only counsel a thing to be done; that is, according to its instruction, so it ministers to holiness. If God hath put a law into our minds, conscience will force obedience, or make us to suffer for our disobedience; but if a proposition, tending to holiness and its advantages, be intrusted to the conduct of conscience, then it presses it by all its proper inducements, by which it was laid up there, and leaves the spirit of a man to his liberty; but if it be not followed, it upbraids our weaknesses, and chides our follies, and reproves our despising holy degrees, and greater excellencies of glory laid up for loving and willing spirits. Such

^b Orat. 25.

^c Cicero pro Milone, § 28. 3. Wetzel, page 254.

as is that of Clemens Alexandrinus^d, in the matter of an evangelical counsel; Οὐχ ἀμαρτάνει μὲν χωτὰ διαθήκην· οὐ γὰρ πεκάλυται τῷρος τοῦ νόμου· οὐ τῷροι δὲ τῆς κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τολιτείας, κατ' ἐπίτασιν, τελειότητα, “He that does so and so, sins not; for he is not forbidden by the law of the Gospel; but yet he falls short of the perfection, that is designed and propounded to voluntary and obedient persons.” To sum up this :

28. When St. Paul had reproved the endless genealogies of the Gnostics and Platonists, making circles of the same things, or of divers whose difference they understood not; as intelligence, fear, majesty, wisdom, magnificence, mercy, victory, kingdom, foundation, God, and such unintelligible stuff which would make fools stare and wise men at a loss; he subjoins a short, but a more discernible genealogy, and conjugation of things to our purpose: “The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned^e:” that is, out of an unfeigned faith proceeds a good conscience; that is, abstinence from sin;— and from thence comes purity of heart, or a separation from the trifling regards of the world, and all affections to sin; and these all end in charity: that is, in peace, in joy, and the fruition and love of God, in unions and contemplations in the bosom of eternity. So that faith is the first mover in the understanding part, and the next is conscience; and they both purify the heart from false persuasions, and evil affections: and then they join to the production of love and felicity.

Thus far are the nature and offices of conscience: it will concern us next, to consider by what general measures we are to treat our conscience, that it may be useful to us in all the intentions of it, and in the designs of God.

^d Stromat. lib. 4.

^e 1 Tim. i. 5. 2 Tim. i. 3. ii. 22. Heb. ix. 14. x. 22. xiii. 18. Acts, xv. 9.

RULE III.

Be careful that Prejudice or Passion, Fancy and Affection, Error or Illusion, be not mistaken for Conscience.

1. **NOTHING** is more usual, than to pretend conscience to all the actions of men which are public, and whose nature cannot be concealed. If arms be taken up in a violent war; inquire of both sides, why they engage on that part respectively; they answer, because of their conscience. Ask a schismatic why he refuses to join in the communion of the church; he tells you, it is against his conscience:—and the disobedient refuse to submit to laws; and they also, in many cases, pretend conscience. Nay, some men suspect their brother of a crime, and are persuaded, as they say, in conscience that he did it: and their conscience tells them that Titius did steal their goods, or that Caia is an adulteress. And so suspicion, and jealousy, and disobedience, and rebellion, are become conscience; in which there is neither knowledge, nor revelation, nor truth, nor charity nor reason, nor religion. “*Quod volumus, sanctum est,*” was the proverb of Sichonius and the Donatists.

*Nemo suæ mentis motus non æstimat æquos,
Quodque volunt homines, se bene velle putant.^f*

Every man's way seems right in his own eyes; and what they think is not against conscience, they think or pretend to think, it is an effect of conscience; and so their fond persuasions and fancies are made sacred, and conscience is pretended, and themselves and every man else is abused. But in these cases and the like, men have found a sweetness in it to serve their ends upon religion, and because conscience is the religious understanding, or the mind of a man as it stands dressed in and for religion, they think that some sacredness or authority passes upon their passion or design, if they call it conscience.

2. But by this rule it is intended that we should observe the strict measures of conscience. For an illusion may make a conscience, that is, may oblige by its directive and compulsive power. Conscience is like a king, whose power and authority are regular, whatsoever counsel he follows.

^f Prosper. Epigr. de Cohibenda Ira.

And although he may command fond things, being abused by flatterers, or misinformation, yet the commandment issues from a just authority, and therefore equally passes into a law; so it is in conscience. If error or passion dictates, the king is misinformed, but the inferiors are bound to obey: and we may no more disobey our conscience commanding of evil things, than we may disobey our king enjoining things imprudent and inconvenient. But therefore this rule gives caution to observe the information and inducement, and if we can discern the abuse, then the evil is avoided. For this governor ‘conscience’ is tied to laws, as kings are to the laws of God and nations, to justice and charity; and a man’s conscience cannot be malicious: his will may; but if the error be discovered, the conscience, that is, the practical understanding, cannot. For it is impossible for a man to believe what himself finds to be an error: and when we perceive our conscience to be misguided, the deception is at an end. And therefore to make up this rule complete, we ought to be strict and united to our rule: for by that only we can be guided, and by the proportions to it we can discern right and wrong, when we walk safely, and when we walk by false fires. Concerning which, besides the direct survey of the rule and action, and the comparing each other, we may, in cases of doubt and suspicion, be helped by the following measures.

Advices for the Practice of the former Rule.

3. (1.) We are to suspect our conscience to be misinformed, when we are not willing to inquire into the particulars. He that searches, desires to find, and so far takes the right course: for truth can never hurt a man, though it may prejudice his vice, and his affected folly. In the inquiries after truth, every man should have a traveller’s indifference, wholly careless whether this or that be the right way, so he may find it. For we are not to choose the way because it looks fair, but because it leads surely. And to this purpose, the most hearty and particular inquest is most prudent and effective. But we are afraid of truth when we will not inquire, that is, when the truth is against our interest or passion, our lust or folly, that is, seemingly against us, in the present indisposition of our affairs.

4. (2.) He that resolves upon the conclusion before the premises, inquiring into particulars to confirm his opinion at a venture, not to shake it if it be false, or to establish it only in case it be true, unless he be defended by chance, is sure to mistake, or at least can never be sure whether he does or no.

This is to be understood in all cases to be so, unless the particular unknown be secured by a general that is known. He that believes Christ's advocation and intercession for us in heaven upon the stock of Scripture, cannot be prejudiced by this rule, although, in the inquiries of probation and arguments of the doctrine, he resolve to believe nothing that shall make against his conclusion; because he is ascertained by a proposition that cannot fail him. The reason of this exception is this, because in all discourses which are not perfectly demonstrative, there is one lame supporter, which must be helped out by the better leg; and the weaker part does its office well enough, if it can bring us to a place where we may rest ourselves and rely. He that cannot choose for himself, hath chosen well enough, if he can choose one that can choose for him; and when he hath, he may prudently rely upon such a person in all particulars, where he himself cannot judge, and the other can, or he thinks he can, and cannot well know the contrary. It is easier to judge of the general lines of duty, than of minutes and particulars: and travellers that are not well skilled in all the little turnings of the ways, may confidently rely upon a guide whom they choose out of the natives of the place; and if he understands the coast of the country, he may well harden his face against any vile person, that goes about wittily to persuade him he must go the contrary way, though he cannot answer his arguments to the contrary. A man may prudently and piously hold a conclusion, which he cannot defend against a witty adversary, if he have one strong hold upon which he may rely for the whole question; because he derives his conclusion from the best ground he hath, and takes the wisest course he can, and uses the best means he can get, and chooses the safest ways that are in his power. No man is bound to do better than his best.

5. (3.) Illusion cannot be distinguished from conscience, if, in our search, we take a wrong course and use incompetent

instruments. He that will choose to follow the multitude which easily errs, rather than the wise guides of souls; and a man that is his partner in the question, rather than him that is disinterested; and them that speak by chance, rather than them who have studied the question: and a man of another profession, rather than him whose office and employment it is to answer,—hath no reason to be confident he shall be well instructed. John Nider^g tells an apostrophe well enough to this purpose:—Two brethren travelling together, whereof one was esteemed wise, and the other little better than a fool, came to a place where the way parted. The foolish brother espousing one of them to be fair and pleasant, and the other dirty and uneven, would needs go that way, though his wiser brother told him, that in all reason that must needs be the wrong way; but he followed his own eyes, not his brother's reason: and his brother being more kind than wise, though against his reason, followed his foolish brother; they went on till they fell into the hands of thieves, who robbed them and imprisoned them, till they could redeem themselves with a sum of money. These brothers accuse each other before the king as author of each other's evil. The wiser complained that his brother would not obey him, though he was known to be wiser, and spake reason. The other complained of him for following him that was a fool, affirming, that he would have returned back, if he had seen his wise brother confident, and to have followed his own reason. The king condemned them both; the fool, because he did not follow the direction of the wise,—and the wise, because he did follow the wilfulness of the fool.—So will God deal with us at the day of judgment in the scrutinies of conscience. If appetite refuses to follow reason, and reason does not refuse to follow appetite, they have both of them taken incompetent courses, and shall perish together. It was wisely said of Brutus^h to Cicero, “Malo tuum judicium, quam ex altera parte omnium istorum. Tu enim à certo sensu et vero judicas de nobis; quod isti ne faciant, summa malevolentia et ligure impediuntur:” “I prefer thy judgment singly, before all theirs, because thou judgest by intuition of the thing; they cannot do that, being hindered by envy and ill-will.”—The particulars of reducing this advice to practice in all special cases, I shall afterward enumerate; for the present I

^g In Lavacro Conscient.^h Lib. 11. Famil. Epist. 10. Cortius, p. 570.

say this only, that a man may consent to an evil authority, and rest in a false persuasion, and be conducted by an abused conscience, so long as the legislative reason is not conjoined to the judge conscience, that is, while by unapt instruments we suffer our persuasions to be determined.

6. (4.) That determination is to be suspected, that does apparently serve an interest, and but obscurely serve a pious end :

Utile quod nobis, do tibi consilium[†]:

When that appears, and nothing else appears, the resolution or counsel is to be considered warily before it be pursued. It is a great allay to the confidence of the bold talkers in the church of Rome, and hinders their gain and market of proselytes from among the wise and pious very much,—that most of their propositions, for which they contend so earnestly against the other parts of Christendom, do evidently serve the ends of covetousness and ambition, of power and riches, and therefore stand vehemently suspected of design and art, rather than of piety or truth of the article, or designs upon heaven. I instance in the pope's power over princes and all the world ; his power of dispensation ; the exemption of the clergy from jurisdiction of secular princes ; the doctrine of purgatory and indulgences, by which once the friars were set a work to raise a portion for a lady, the niece of Pope Leo X. ; the doctrine of transubstantiation, by the effects and consequence of which, the priests are made greater than angels, and next to God ; and so is also that heap of doctrines, by the particulars of which the ecclesiastical power is far advanced beyond the authority of any warrant from Scripture, and is made highly instrumental for procuring absolute obedience to the Papacy. In these things every man with half an eye can see the temporal advantage ; but how piety and truth shall thrive in the meanwhile, no eye hath yet been so illuminate as to perceive. It was the advice of Ben Sirach^k, “ Consult not with a woman touching her of whom she is jealous ; neither with a coward in matters of war ; nor with a merchant concerning exchange ; nor with a buyer, of selling ; nor with an envious man of thankfulness ; nor with an unmerciful man touching kindness ; nor with the slothful for any work ; nor with the hireling, for a year of

[†] Martial. 5. 20. 18.

^k Ecclus. xxxvii. 11.

finishing work; nor with an idle servant, of much business; hearken not unto these in any matter of counsel." These will counsel by their interest, not for thy advantage.

But it is possible that both truth and interest may be conjoined; and when a priest preaches to the people the necessity of paying tithes, where they are by law appointed, or when a poor man pleads for charity, or a man in debt urges the excellency of forgetfulness; the truth which they discourse of, cannot be prejudiced by their proper concernments. For if the proposition serves the ends in religion, in providing for their personal necessities, their need makes the instances still the more religious, and the things may otherwise be proved. But when the end of piety is obscure, or the truth of the proposition is uncertain, then observe the bias; and if the man's zeal be bigger than the certainty of the proposition, it is to be estimated by the interest, and to be used accordingly.

But this is not to prejudice him that gives the counsel; for although the counsel is to be suspected, yet the man is not, unless by some other indications he betray himself. For he may be heartily and innocently persuaded of the thing he counsels, and the more easily and aptly believe that, against which himself did less watch, because he quickly perceived it could not be against himself.

Add to this, the counsel is the less to be suspected, if it be asked, then if it be offered. But this is a consideration of prudence, not of conscience directly.

7. (5.) If the proposition serve or maintain a vice, or lessen a virtue, it is certainly not conscience, but error and abuse; because no truth of God can serve God's enemy directly, or by its own force and persuasion. But this is to be understood only in case the answer does directly minister to sin, not if it does so only accidentally. Q. Furius is married to Valeria; but she being fierce and imperious, quarrelsome and loud, and he peevish and fretful, turns her away that he might have peace and live in patience. But being admonished by Hortensius the orator, to take her again,—he asked counsel of the priests, and they advise him to receive her. He answers, that then he cannot live innocently, but in a perpetual state of temptation, in which he daily falls. The priest replies, that it is his own fault; let him learn patience, and

prudence; for his fault in this instance is no warranty to make him neglect a duty in another; and he answered rightly. If he had counselled him to drink intemperately to make him forget his sorrow, or to break her bones to make her silent, or to keep company with harlots to vex her into compliance, his counsel had ministered directly to sin, and might not be received.

8. (6.) Besides the evidence of the thing, and a direct conformity to the rule, to be judged by every sober person, or by himself in his wits, there is ordinarily no other collateral assurance, but an honest hearty endeavour in our proportion, to make as wise inquiries as we can, and to get the best helps which are to be had by us, and to obey the best we do make use of. To which (because a deception may tacitly creep upon our very simplicity) if we add a hearty prayer, we shall certainly be guided through the labyrinth, and secured against ourselves, and our own secret follies. This is the counsel of the Son of Sirach¹; “ Above all this; pray to the Most High, that he will direct thy way in truth.”

RULE IV.

The Conscience of a vicious Man is an evil Judge, and an imperfect Rule.

1. THAT I mean the superior and inferior part of conscience, is therefore plain, because the rule notes how the acts of conscience may be made invalid both as it is a ruler, and as it is a judge. But, according to the several offices, this truth hath some variety.

2. (1.) The superior part of conscience, or the *συντήρησις*, repository of practical principles (which for use and brevity's sake, I shall call the phylactery), or the keeper of records; that is, that part which contains in it all the natural and reasonable principles of good actions (such as are, God is to be worshipped,—Do to others as they should do to thee,—The pledge is to be restored,—By doing harm to others thou must not procure thy own good,—and the like), is always a

¹ Ecclus. xxxvii. 15.

certain and regular judge in the prime principles of reason and religion, so long as a man is in his wits, and hath the natural use of reason. For those things which are first imprinted, which are universal principles, which are consented to by all men without a teacher, those which Aristotle calls *κοινὰς ἐγγενεῖς*, those are always the last removed, and never without the greatest violence and perturbation in the world. But it is possible for a man to forget his name and his nature: a lycanthropy made Nebuchadnezzar to do so, and a fever made a learned Greek do so: but so long as a man's reason is whole, not destroyed by its proper disease; that is, so long as a man hath the use of reason, and can and will discourse, so long his conscience will teach him the general precepts of duty; for they are imprinted in his nature, and there is nothing natural to the soul, if reason be not; and no reason is, unless its first principles be, and those first principles are most provided for, which are the most perfective of a man, and necessary to his well-being, and those are such which concern the intercourse between God and man, and between men in the first and greatest lines of their society. The very opening of this chain is sufficient proof; it is not necessary to intricate it by offering more testimony.

3. (2.) But then these general principles are either to be considered as they are habitually incumbent on the mind, or as actually applied to practice. In the former sense they can never be totally extinguished, for they are natural, and will return whenever a man ceases from suffering his greatest violence; and those violences, which are so destructive of nature, as this must be that makes a man forget his being, will fall off upon every accident and change. "Difficile est personam diu sustinere." But then when these principles come to be applied to practice, a strong vice and a malicious heart can draw a veil over them, that they shall not then appear to disorder the sensual resolution. A short madness, and a violent passion, or a fit of drunkenness, can make a man securely sin by incogitancy, even when the action is in the manner of a universal principle. No man can be brought to that pass, as to believe that God ought not to be honoured; but supposing there is a God, it is unavoidable that this God must be honoured: but a transient and unnatural violence intervening in a particular case, suspends the application of

that principle, and makes the man not to consider his rule; and there he omits to worship and honour this God in many particulars to which the principle is applicable. But this discourse is coincident with that question, whether conscience may be totally lost? of which I have already given accounts^m: That and this will give light to each other.

4. (3.) But further, there are also some principles which are indeed naturally known, that is, by principles of natural reason: but because they are not the immediate principles of our creation and proper being, they have the same truth, and the same seat, and the same certainty; but not the same prime evidence, and connaturality to the soul; and therefore these may be lost, or obscured to all purposes of usefulness, and their contradictories may be admitted into the rule of conscience. Of this nature, I reckon, that fornication, violent and crafty contracts, with many arts of deception, and overreaching our brother, theft, incest in some kinds, drunkenness, and the like, are to be avoided. For concerning these, it is certain that some whole nations have so abused their conscience by evil manners, that the law in their mind hath been cancelled, and these things have passed for lawful. And to this day, that duels may be fought by private persons, and authority, is a thing so practised by a whole sort of men, that it is believed: and the practice, and the belief of the lawfulness of it, are interchangeably daughter and mother to each other. These are such of whom the Apostle speaksⁿ, they are "given over to believe a lie," they are delivered "to a reprobate mind." And this often happens, and particularly in those cases wherein one sin is inferred by another naturally, or morally, or by withdrawing of the divine grace.

5. (4.) Wherever the superior or the ruling part of conscience is an imperfect rule; in the same cases the inferior is an evil judge, that is, acquits the criminal, or condemns the innocent, calling good evil, and evil good: which is to be understood when the persuasion of the erring conscience is permanent and hearty, not sudden, and by the rapid violence of a passion: for in this case the conscience condemns as soon as that is acted, to which, before the action, it was cozened and betrayed: but it proceeds only in abiding and lasting errors. And this is the cause why so many orders of

^m In rule 1. numb. 5. et seq.

ⁿ Rom. i. 28.

persons continue in a course of sin with delight, and uninterrupted pleasure, thinking rebellion to be a just defence, sacrilege a lawful title; while other men, that are otherwise and justly persuaded, wonder at their peace, and hate their practices. Our blessed Lord foretold concerning the prosecutors of the church, that they should 'think they did God good service.' But such men have an evil portion, they sing in the fire, and go dancing to their graves, and sleep on till they be awakened in hell. And on the other side, this is because of superstition, and scruples, and sometimes of despairing and unreasonable fears, when the conscience is abused by thinking that to be sin, which is none.

RULE V.

All Consciences are to walk by the same Rule; and that which is just to one, is so to all, in the like Circumstances.

1. IF all men were governed by the same laws, and had the same interest, and the same degrees of understanding, they would perceive the truth of this conclusion. But men are infinitely differenced by their own acts and relations, by their understandings and proper economy, by their superinduced differences and orders, by interest and mistake, by ignorance and malice, by sects and deceptions. And this makes that two men may be damned for doing two contradictories: as a Jew may perish for not keeping of his sabbath, and a Christian for keeping it; an Iconoclast for breaking images, and another for worshipping them: for eating, and for not eating; for receiving the holy communion, and for not receiving it; for coming to church, or staying at home.

2. But this variety is not directly of God's making, but of man's. God commands us to walk by the same rule, and to this end, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, "to be of the same mind;" and this is ἀκρίτεια συνειδήσεως, "the exactness of our conscience;" which precept were impossible to be observed, if there were not one rule, and this rule also very easy. For some men have but a small portion of reason and discretion, and they cannot help it; and yet the precept is incumbent upon them all alike; and therefore as the rule is one, so it is plain and easy, and written in every man's heart; and as

every man's reason is the same thing, so is every man's conscience ; and this comes to be altered, just as that.

3. Neither is the unity of the rule prejudiced by the infinite difference of cases. For as a river, springing from the mountains of the east, is tempted by the levels of the ground and the uneasiness of its passage, to make some turns backward towards its head, even while it intends westward ; so are the cases of conscience branched out into instances, sometimes of contrary proceedings, which are to be determined to cross effects, but still upon the same account. For in all things of the world the obligation is uniform, and it is of the same persuasion.

The case is this :

4. Autolycus robbed the gardens of Trebonius, and asked him forgiveness, and had it. But when Trebonius was chosen consul, and Autolycus robbed him again, and was taken by others, and as a thief brought before him, he asked forgiveness again : but Trebonius condemned him to the galleys : for he who being a private man was bound to forgive a repenting trespasser, being a magistrate was bound not to forgive him ; and both these were upon the same account. A man may forgive an injury done to himself, because it is his own right, and he may alone meddle in it ; but an injury done to the commonwealth, she only could forgive, not her minister. So,

5. He that fasted upon a Saturday in Ionia or Smyrna, was a schismatic ; and so was he who did not fast at Milan or Rome upon the same day, both upon the same reason :

Cum fueris Romæ, Romano vivito more ;
Cum fueris alibi, vivito sicut ibi ;

because he was to conform to the custom of Smyrna, as well as to that of Milan, in the respective diocesses.

6. To kill a man, in some cases, defiles a land ; in others, it cleanses it, and puts away blood from the people ; and it was plain in the case of circumcision. St. Paul did it, and did it not ; both because he ought, and because he ought not ; and all upon the same account and law of charity. And therefore all inquiries, and all contentions, and questions, should be relations to the rule, and be tried by nothing but a plain measure of justice and religion, and not stand or

fall by relations to separate propositions and distinct regards. For that is one and easy; these are infinite, uncertain, and contradictory. Τοῦτ' ἔστι τὸ αἴτιον ἀνθρώποις πάγτων τῶν κακῶν τὸ τὰς προλήψεις τὰς κοινὰς μὴ δύνασθαι ἐφαρμόζειν ταῖς ἐπὶ μέρους. "It is a very great cause of mischief not to be able to deduce general propositions, and fit them to particular cases," said Arrianus^o. But because all men cannot, therefore there will be an eternal necessity of spiritual guides, whose employment, and the business of their life, must be to make themselves able 'respondere de jure,' 'to answer in matters of law,' and they also must be truly informed in the matters of fact.

RULE VI.

In Conscience, that which is first, is truest, easiest, and most useful.

1. THERE are some practices, which, at the first sight, and by the very name and nature of the things themselves, seem as directly unreasonable and against a commandment, as any other thing of the foulest reproach; and yet, object the sin to the owners, and they will tell so many fine stories, and struggle, and distinguish, and state the question in a new manner, and chop it into fragments, and disguise the whole affair, that they do not only content and believe themselves, but also lessen the confidence of the adversary, and make a plain rule an uneasy lesson. I instance in the question of images, the making of some of which, and the worshipping of any, does at the first sight as plainly dash against the second commandment, as adultery does against the sixth. But if you examine the practice of the Roman church, and estimate them by the more wary determination of the article in Trent, and weigh it by the distinctions and laborious devices of its patrons, and believe their pretences and shows, it must needs be that you will abate something of the reproof; and yet all the while the worship of images goes forward: and if you lay the commandment over-against the devices and distinctions, it will not be easy to tell what the commandment does mean; and yet because it was given to

^o In Epictet. lib. 3. c. 26.

the meanest understandings, and was fitted for them, either the conscience is left without a clear rule, or that sense is to be followed which stands nearest the light, that which is next to the natural and proper sense of the words. For it is certain God puts no disguises upon his own commandments, and the words are meant plainly and heartily; and the further you remove from their first sense, the more you have lost the purpose of your rule. In matters of conscience, that is the best sense, which every wise man takes in, before he hath sullied his understanding with the disguises of sophisters, and interested persons; for then they speak without prejudice and art, that is, so as they should speak, who intend to guide wise men, and all men.

2. But this is to be understood otherwise, when the first sense of the words hath, in its letter, a prejudice open and easy to be seen; such as is that of ‘putting out the right eye,’ or ‘cutting off the hand.’ The face is a vizor and a metaphor, and the heart of it only is the commandment, and that is to be understood by the measures of this rule; that is, the prime and most natural signification is the best, that which is of nearest correspondency to the metaphor and the design of the speaker, and the occasion and matter of discourse.

3. But in all things where the precept is given in the proper style of laws, and the veil is off, and the words are plain, he that takes the first sense is the likeliest to be well guided. If a war be commenced between a king and his people, he that is willing to read his duty, may see it in the words of Christ and of three apostles, and it is easy to know our duty; but when we are engaged against our prince, it is certain we are hugely put to it to make it lawful, and when our conscience must struggle for its rule, it is not so well as when it takes that which lies easy before us. Truth is easy, error is intricate and hard. If none but witty men could understand their duty, the ignorant and idiot could not be saved; but in the event of things it will be found that this man’s conscience was better guided while simplicity held the taper, than by all the false fires of art, and witty distinctions. “Qui ambulat simpliciter, ambulat confidenter,” saith Solomon. It is safer to walk on plain ground, than with tricks and devices to dance upon the ropes,

RULE VII.

Conscience by its several Habitudes and Relations or Tendencies towards its proper Object, is divided into several Kinds.

1. CONSCIENCE in respect of its information, or as it relates to its object, taken materially, and in the nature of the thing, is either true or false, right or wrong; true when it is rightly informed, and proceeds justly; false when it is deceived. Between these as participating of either extreme, stands the probable conscience; which if we consider as it relates to its object, is sometimes right, and sometimes wrong, and so may be reduced to either, according as it is in the event of things. For in two contradictories which are both probable, as if one be, both are; if one part be true, the other is false; and the conscience of the several men holding the opposite parts, must be so too, that is, right and wrong, deceived and not deceived, respectively. The division then of conscience, in respect of its object, is tripartite.

2. For in all questions, if notice can be certainly had, he that gets the notice, hath a true conscience: he that misses it, hath a false or erring conscience. But if the notices that can be had, be uncertain, imperfectly revealed, or weakly transmitted, or understood by halves, or not well represented; because the understanding cannot be sure, the conscience can be but probable. But according as the understanding is fortunate, or the man wise and diligent, and honest enough to take the right side of the probability, so the conscience takes its place in the extreme, and is reduced to right or wrong accordingly.

3. But to be right or wrong, is wholly extrinsical to the formal obligation of conscience, as it is a judge and a guide, and to the consequent duty of the man. For an erring conscience binds as much as the right conscience, directly and immediately, and collaterally more; that is, the man who hath an erring conscience, is tied to more and other duties, than he that is in the right. The conscience binds because it is heartily persuaded, not because it is truly informed; not because it is right, but because it thinks so.

4. It does indeed concern the duty of conscience, and its felicity, to see that it be rightly instructed, but as to the

consequence of the action, it is all one: this must follow whatsoever goes before. And therefore, although it concerns the man, as much as his felicity and all his hopes come to, to take care that his conscience be not abused in the matter of duty; yet a right and a wrong conscience are not made distinct guides and different judges. Since therefore we are to consider and treat of conscience, as it is the guide of our actions, and judge of our persons, we are to take it in other aspects, than by a direct face towards its object; the relation to which alone, cannot diversify its kind, so much as to become a universal rule to us in all cases and emergencies.

5. Now because intellectual habits, employed about the same general object, have no way to make them of different natures, but by their formal tendencies, and different manners of being affected with the same object; we are in order to the perfect division and assignation of the kinds of conscience, to consider the right conscience, either as it is sure, or as it is only confident, but not sure. For an erring conscience and the unerring are the same judge, and the same guide, as to the authority and persuasion and as to the effect upon the person: but yet they differ infinitely in their rule; and the persons under their conduct differ as much in their state and condition. But our conscience is not a good guide unless we be truly informed, and know it. For if we be truly informed, and know it not, it is an uncertain and an imperfect guide. But if we be confident and yet deceived, the uncertainty and hesitation are taken off, but we are still very miserable. For we are like an erring traveller, who being out of the way, and thinking himself right, spurs his horse and runs full speed: he that comes behind, is nearer to his journey's end.

6. That therefore is the first kind of conscience, the right sure conscience; and this alone is fit to be our guide; but this alone is not our judge.

7. (2.) Opposite to this is the confident or erring conscience; that is, such which indeed is misinformed, but yet assents to its objects with the same confidence as does the right and sure; but yet upon differing grounds, motives, and inducements: which because they are always criminal, although the assent is peremptory and confident, yet the de-

ception is voluntary and vicious in its cause; and therefore the present confidence cannot warrant the action, it only makes the sinner bold. So that these two differ in their manner of entering into the assent; the one entering by the door, the other by the breaches of the wall: good will and bad, virtue and vice, duty and sin, keeping the several keys of the persuasion and consent.

8. This erring conscience I therefore affirm to be always voluntary and vicious in its principle, because all God's laws are plain in all matter of necessary duty: and when all men are to be guided, learned and unlearned, the rule is plain and easy, because it is necessary it should be so. But therefore if there happen any invincible ignorance, or involuntary deception, it is there where the rule is not plain; and then the matter is but probable, and then the conscience is according. And this makes the third kind of conscience, in respect of the different manner of being affected with the object.

9. (3.) The probable conscience is made by that manner of assent to the object, which is indeed without fear, but not without imperfection. The thing itself is of that nature, that it cannot properly make faith or certainty of adherence; and the understanding considers it as it is represented without any prejudice or prepossession; and then the thing must be believed as it deserves, and no more: but because it does not deserve a full assent, it hath but an imperfect one; but it is perfect enough in its kind, that is, it is as much as it ought to be, as much as the thing deserves. These are all the kinds of conscience that are perfect.

10. (4.) But sometimes the state and acts of conscience are imperfect; as the vision of an evil eye, or the motion of a broken arm, or the act of an imperfect or abused understanding: so the conscience in some cases is carried to its object but with an imperfect assent, and operates with a lame and deficient principle: and the causes of it are the vicious or abused affections, accidents or incidents to the conscience. Sometimes it happens, that the arguments of both the sides in a question seem so indifferent, that the conscience being affrighted and abused by fear and weakness, dares not determine and consequently dares not do any thing; and if it be constrained to act, it is determined from without, not by itself, but by accidents and persuasion, by

importunity or force, by interest or fear: and whatever the ingredient be, yet when it does act, it acts with fear, because it reflects upon itself, and considers it hath no warrant, and therefore whatever it does, becomes a sin. This is the calamity of a doubting conscience. This doubting does not always proceed from the equality of the parts of the question, but sometimes wholly from want of knowing any thing of it; as if we were put to declare whether there were more men or women in the world? Whether the number of the stars were even or odd? Sometimes from inconsideration, sometimes from surprise, sometimes from confusion and disease; but from what principle soever it be, there is always some fear in it. This conscience can neither be a good guide, nor a good judge; we cannot do any thing by its conduct, nor be judged by it; for all that can be done before or after it, is not by it, but by the suppletories of the perfect conscience.

11. (5.) A less degree of this evil, is that which by the masters of moral theology is called the scrupulous conscience, which is not a distinct kind of conscience, as is usually supposed, but differs from the doubting conscience only in the degrees of the evil. The doubt is less, and the fear is not so violent as to make it unlawful to do any thing: something of the doubt is taken off, and the man can proceed to action without sin, but not without trouble; he is uneasy and timorous, even when he is most innocent; and the causes of this are not only portions of the same weaknesses which cause the doubting conscience; but sometimes superstition, and melancholy, and pusillanimity, and mean opinions of God, are ingredients into this imperfect assent: and in such cases, although the scrupulous man may act without sin, and produce his part of the determination, yet his scruple is not innocent, but sometimes criminal, but always calamitous. This is like a mote in the eye, but a doubt is like a beam.

12. This conscience may be a right guide, but dares not be a judge: it is like a guide in the dark, that knows the way, but fears every bush; and because he may err, thinks he does. The effect of this imperfection is nothing but a heartless and uncomfortable proceeding in our duty, and what else the devil can make of it, by heightening the evil

and abusing the man, who sits upon a sure foundation, but dares not trust it: he cannot rely upon that, which yet he cannot disbelieve.

13. (6.) There are some other affections of conscience, and accidental appendages: but because they do not vary the manner of its being affected with its proper object, they cannot diversify conscience into several kinds, as it is a guide and judge of human actions. But because they have no direct influence upon our souls, and relate not to duty, but are to be conducted by ryles of the other kinds, I shall here only enumerate their kinds, and permit to preachers to discourse of their natures, and collateral obligations to duty, of their remedies and assistances, their advantages and disadvantages respectively. These also are five: 1. The tender conscience. 2. The hardened or obdurate. 3. The quiet. 4. The restless or disturbed. 5. And lastly, The perverse conscience. Concerning which, I shall at present say this only: that the two first are seated principally in the will, but have a mixture of conscience, as docibility hath of understanding. The two next are seated in the fancy, or the affections, and are not properly placed in the conscience, any more than love or desire; but yet from conscience they have their birth. And for the last, it is a heap of irregular principles, and irregular defects, and is the same in conscience, as deformity is in the body, or peevishness in the affections.

CHAP. II.

OF THE RIGHT OR SURE CONSCIENCE.

RULE I.

A right Conscience is that which guides our Actions by right and proportioned Means, to a right End.

THE end is, God's glory, or any honest purpose of justice or religion, charity or civil conversation. Whatsoever is good for us or our neighbour, in any sense perfective of our being as God purposed it, all that is our end. The means ought to be such as are apt instruments to procure it. If a

man intends to live a severe life, and to attend religion, his end is just and fair, and so far his conscience is right: but if his conscience suggest to him, that he to obtain his end should erect colleges of women; and in the midst of feasts, and songs, and society, he should preach the melancholy lectures of the cross, it is not right; because the end is reached at by a contrary hand. But when it tells him, that to obtain continence he must fast and pray, watch diligently, and observe prudently, labour and read, and deny his appetite in its daily attempts upon him, then it is a right conscience. For a right conscience is nothing but right reason reduced to practice, and conducting moral actions. Now all that right reason can be defined by, is the propounding a good end, and good means to that end.

RULE II.

In a right Conscience, the practical Judgment, that is, the last Determination to an Action, ought to be sure and evident.

1. THIS is plain in all the great lines of duty, in actions determinable by the prime principles of natural reason, or divine revelation; but it is true also in all actions conducted by a right and perfect conscience. This relies upon all that account on which it is forbidden to do actions of danger, or doubt, lest we perish in the danger:—which are to be handled in their proper place. But for the present we are to observe, that in the question of actions, whose rule is not notorious and primely evident, there is or may be a double judgment.

2. The first judges the thing probable by reason of the differing opinions of men wise and pious; but in this there is a fear or suspicion of the contrary, and therefore in the direct act nothing is certain. But there is also, secondly, a reflex act of judgment; which upon consideration that it is certain that a probable action may lawfully be done; or else, that that which is but probable in the nature of the thing (so far as we perceive it) may yet, by the superadding of some circumstances, and prudential considerations, or by equity or necessity, become more than probable in the particular; although, I say, the conscience be uncertain in the

direct act, yet it may be certain, right, and determined, in the reflex and second act of judgment; and if it be, it is innocent and safe, it is that which we call the right-sure conscience.

3. For in moral things there cannot ordinarily be a demonstrative or mathematical certainty: and in morality we call that certain, that is a thing to be followed and chosen, which oftentimes is but very highly probable; and many things do not attain that degree; and therefore because it is very often impossible, it is certainly not necessary that the direct judgment should be sure and evident in all cases. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἐπιστητὸν, ἀποδεικτὸν· τέχνη δὲ καὶ φρόνησις τυγχάνουσιν οὖσαι περὶ τὰ ἐνδεχόμενα ἄλλως ἔχειν, “ Science is of those things which can be demonstrated; but prudence [and conscience], of things which are thus, or may be otherwise^p.”— But if it be not supplied in the reflex and second act of judgment, so that the conscience be either certain in the object, or in the act, the whole progress is a danger, and the product is criminal; the conscience is doubtful, and the action is a sin.

4. It is in this as is usually taught concerning the divine knowledge of things contingent; which although they are in their own nature fallible and contingent, yet are known certainly and infallibly by God, and according to the nature of the things, even beyond what they are in their natural, proper, and next causes: and there is a rare and secret expression of Christ's incarnation used by St. Paul, “ in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” that is, the manner is contrary to the thing; the Godhead that is wholly incorporeal dwells in him corporally. After the like manner of signification is the present certainty I speak of. If it be not certain in the object, it must be certain in the faculty, that is, at least it must be a certain persuasion, though of an uncertain article: and we must be certain and fully persuaded, that the thing may be done by us lawfully, though whether the thing itself be lawful, is at most but highly probable.

5. So that in effect it comes but to this; The knowledge that is here required, is but the fulness of persuasion, which is and ought to be in a right conscience: Οἶδα καὶ πέπεισμαι. “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus:” so St. Paul^q.— Our knowledge here, which is but in part, must yet be a full

^p Aristot. Ethic. lib. 6. cap. 6. Wilkinson, p. 240.

^q Rom. xiv. 14.

confidence for the matters of duty. The conclusions then are these :

1. There must be a certainty of adherence in the actions of a right conscience.

2. It must also, for the matter of it too, at least be on the right side of the probability.

The conscience must be confident, and it must also have reason enough so to be; or at least, so much as can secure the confidence from illusion; although possibly the confidence may be greater than the evidence, and the conclusion bigger than the premises. Thus the good simple man, that, about the time of the Nicene council, confuted the stubborn and subtle philosopher by a confident saying-over his creed: and the holy and innocent idiot, or plain easy people of the laity, that cannot prove Christianity by any demonstrations, but by that of a holy life, and obedience unto death; they believe it so, that they put all their hopes upon it, and will most willingly prove it again by dying for it, if God shall call them. This is one of the excellences of faith; and in all cases where the mercies of God have conducted the man into the right, it is not subject to illusion. But for that particular, I mean, that we be in the right, we are to take all that care which God hath put into our power:—of which I have already said something, and shall give fuller accounts in its proper place.

RULE III.

The practical Judgment of a right Conscience is always agreeable to the speculative Determination of the Understanding.

1. THIS rule is intended against those whose understanding is right in the proposition, and yet declines in the application; it is true in ‘*thesi*,’ but not in ‘*hypothesi*;’ it is not true when it comes to be their case: and so it is in all that sin against their conscience, and use little arts to evade the clamour of the sin. They are right in the rule, and crooked in the measuring; whose folly is apparent in this, because they deny in particular, what they affirm in the general; and it is true in all, but not in some. David was redargued wit-

tily by Nathan upon this account; he laid the case in a remote scene:—Tilius, or Sempronius, a certain rich man, I know not who, somebody or other, robbed the poor man of his ewe lamb. Therefore said David, ‘ He shall die, whoever he be.’—‘ Yea, but you are the man :’—what then? shall he die still? this is a new arrest; it could not be denied, his own mouth had already given the sentence.

2. And this is a usual but a most effective art to make the conscience right in the particular, by propounding the case separate from its own circumstances; and then to remove it to its own place is no hard matter. It was an ingenious device of Erasistratus the physician, of which Appian tells^r:—When young Antiochus almost died for love of Stratonica his father Seleucus’s wife, the physician told the passionate and indulgent father, that his son was sick of a disease, which he had indeed discovered, but found it also to be incurable. Seleucus with sorrow asking what it was, Erasistratus answered, ‘ He loves my wife.’ But then the old king’s hopes began to revive, and he turned woer in the behalf of his son, begging of the physician, who was his counsellor and his friend, for pity’s sake, for friendship and humanity, to give his wife in exchange or redemption for the young king’s life. Erasistratus replied, ‘ Sir, you ask a thing too unreasonable and great; and though you are his father, yourself would not do it, if it were your own case; and therefore why should I?’ when Seleucus swore by all his country gods that he would do it as willingly as he would live; Erasistratus drew the curtain of the device, and applied it to him, by telling, that the cure of his son depended upon his giving the queen Stratonica to him, which he did; and afterward made it as lawful as he could, by a law postnate to that insolent example, and confirmed it by military suffrages.

3. In all cases we are to consider the rule, not the relation; the law, not the person: for if it be one thing in the proposition, and another in the assumption, it must be false in one place or the other; and then the conscience is but an ill guide, and an ill judge.

4. This rule is not to extend to the exception of particular cases; not to take away privileges, pardons, equity. For

^r De Bellis Syriacis.

that which is fast in the proposition, may become loose in the particular by many intervening causes, of which I am to give account in its due place. For the present, this is certain, that whatsoever particular is of the same account with the general, not separate, or let loose by that hand which first bound it, is to be estimated as the general. But this rule is to go further also.

5. For hitherto, I have called the act of particular conscience directing to a single and circumstantiate action, by the name of practical judgment: and the general dictate of the *συντήρησις*, or phylactery, or upper conscience, teaching the kinds of good actions, by the name of ‘speculative judgment.’ But the rule also is true, and so to be understood, when practical and speculative are taken in their first and proper sense. If in philosophy we discourse that the true God, being a spirit without shape or figure, cannot be represented by an image; although this be only a speculation, and demonstrable in natural philosophy, and no rule of conscience; yet when conscience is to make a judgment concerning the picturing of God the Father, it must not determine practically against that speculation. “That an idol is nothing,” is demonstrable in metaphysics; and therefore that we are to make nothing of it, is a practical truth: and although the first proposition be not directly placed in the upper region of conscience, but is one of the prime metaphysical propositions, not properly theological, according to those words of St. Paul^s, “Concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know δτι πάντες γνῶσιν ἔχομεν ‘that we all have knowledge;’ and we know that an idol is nothing in the world;” meaning, that this knowledge needs no revelation to attest it; we by our own reason and principles of demonstration know that; yet, the lower, or particular practical conscience, must never determine against that extrinsical, and therefore as to conscience, accidental measure.

6. For whatsoever is true in one science, is true also in another; and when we have wisely speculated concerning the dimensions of bodies, their circumscriptions, the acts of sense, the certainty of their healthful perceptions, the commensuration of a place and a body; we must not esteem these to be unconcerning propositions, if ever we come to use

^s 1 Cor. viii. 1. 4.

them in divinity: and therefore we must not worship that which our senses tell us to be a thing below worship: nor believe that infinite which we see measured; nor esteem that greater than the heavens, which, I see and feel, goes into my mouth. If philosophy gives a skin, divinity does not flay it off: and truth cannot be contrary to truth: and God would not in nature teach us any thing to misguide us in the regions of grace.

7. The caution for conducting this proposition is only this: that we be as sure of our speculation, as of any other rule which we ordinarily follow; and that we do not take vain philosophy, for true speculations. He that guides his conscience by a principle of Zeno's philosophy, because he hath been bred in the Stoical sect, and resolves to understand his religion to the sense of his master's theorems, does ill. The Christian religion suffered much prejudice at first by the weak disputings of the Greeks; and they would not admit a religion against the academy, or the cynics, or the Athenian schools; and the Christian school drew some of their articles through the limbecs of Plato's philosophy, and to this day the relish remains upon some of them. And Baronius^t complains of Origen, that, "In Paganorum commentis enutritus, eaque propagare in animo habens, divinas se utique Scripturas interpretari simulavit: ut hoc modo nefariam doctrinam suam sacrarum literarum monumentis maligne admiscens, Paganicum et Manichaicum errorem suum atque Arrianam vesaniam induceret." He mingled the Gentile philosophy with Christian religion, and by analogy to that, expounded this, and how many disciples he had, all the world knows. Nay, not only from the doctrine, but from the practices and rites of the Pagan religion, many Christians did derive their rites, and they in time gave authority and birth to some doctrines.—"Vigilias anniversarias habes apud Suetonium. Lustralem aquam, aspersionem sepulcrorum, lumina in iisdem parare, Sabbato lucernam accendere, cereos in populum distribuere."^u The staff, the ring, the mitre, and many other customs, some good, some only tolerable, the Christians took from the Gentiles; and what effect it might have, and what influence it hath had, in some doctrines, is too notorious to dissemble. Thomas Aquinas did a little

^t Ad Annum 538. sect. 34.

^u A. D. 44. n. 88.

change the scene, and blended Aristotle so with school-divinity, that something of the purity was lost, while much of our religion was exacted and conducted by the rules of a Unistaken philosophy. But if their speculations had been right, Christianity would at first have entered without re-proof, as being the most reasonable religion of the world, and most consonant to the wisest and most sublime speculations; and it would also have continued pure, if it had been still drawn from the fountains of our Saviour, through the limbecs of the evangelists and apostles, without the mixture of the salt waters of that philosophy, which every physician and witty man now-a-days thinks he hath reason and observation enough easily to reprove. But men have resolved to verify their sect rather than the truth; but if of this particular we be careful, we must then also verify every speculation in all things, where it can relate to practice, and is not altered by circumstances.

8. As an appendage, and for the fuller explication of this rule, it is a worthy inquiry which is by some men made, concerning the use of our reason in our religion. For some men, finding reason to be that guide which God hath given us, and concreated with us, know that religion which is super-induced, and comes after it, cannot prejudice that noblest part of this creation. But then, because some articles which are said to be of faith, cannot be madē to appear consonant to their reason, they stick to this, and let that go. Here is a just cause of complaint. But therefore others say, that reason is a good guide in things reasonable and human, but our reason is blind in things divine, and therefore is of little or no use in religion. Here we are to believe, not to dispute. There are on both sides fair pretences, which when we have examined, we may find what part of truth each side aims at, and join them both in practice. They that speak against reason, speak thus.

9. (1.) There is to every state and to every part of man given a proportionable light to guide him in that way, where he ought and is appointed to walk. In the darknesses of this world, and in the actions of common life, the sun and moon in their proper seasons are to give us light: in the actions of human intercourse, and the notions tending to it, reason is our eye, and to it are notices proportioned, drawn

from nature and experience, even from all the principles with which our rational faculties usually do converse. But because a man is designed to the knowledge of God, and of things spiritual, there must spring a new light from heaven; and he must have new capacities, and new illuminations; that is, new eyes, and a new light: for here the eye of reason is too weak, and the natural man is not capable of the things of the Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned. Faith is the eye, and the Holy Spirit gives the light, and the word of God is the lantern, and the spiritual not the rational man can perceive the things of God. “*Secreta Dei, Deo meo, et filiis domus ejus.*” “God and God’s secret ones only know God’s secrets.”

10. (2.) And therefore we find in Holy Scripture that to obey God, and to love him, is the way to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. “*Obedite et intelligetis:*” “If ye will obey, then shall ye understand:” and it was a rare saying of our blessed Saviour, and is of great use and confidence to all who inquire after the truth of God, in the midst of these sad divisions of Christendom,—“If any man will do his will, he shall know whether the doctrine be of God or no.” It is not fineness of discourse, nor the sharpness of arguments, or the witty encounters of disputing men, that can penetrate into the mysteries of faith: the poor humble man that prays, and inquires simply, and listens attentively, and sucks in greedily, and obeys diligently, he is the man that shall know the mind of the Spirit; and therefore St. Paul observes that the sermons of the cross were “foolishness to the Greeks;” and consequently, by way of upbraiding he inquires, “Where is the wise man, where is the scribe, where is the disputer of the world? God hath made the wisdom of the world foolishness;” that is, ‘God hath confounded reason, that faith may come in her place.’

11. (3.) For there are some things in our religion so mysterious, that they are above all our reason; and well may we admire but cannot understand them: and therefore the Spirit of God is sent into the world to bring our understanding into the obedience of Christ; we must obey and not inquire, and every proud thought^z must be submitted to him, who is

^x John, vii. 17.

^z 2 Cor. x. 5.

^y 1 Cor. i. 20.

the wisdom of the Father, who hath, in the Holy Scriptures, taught us all his Father's will.

12. (4.) And therefore, as to this, nothing can be added from the stock of nature or principles of natural reason, so if it did need a supply, reason could ill do it. For the object of our faith must be certain and infallible ; but no man's reason is so ; and therefore to put new wine into broken bottles is no gain, or real advantage ; and although right reason is not to be gainsaid, yet what is right reason is so uncertain, that in the midst of all disputes, every man pretends to it, but who hath it no man can tell, and therefore it cannot be a guide or measure of faith.

13. (5.) But above all, if we will pretend to reason in religion, we have but one great reason that we can be obliged to ; and that is, to believe that whatsoever God hath said, is true : so that our biggest reason in religion is, to submit our reason, that is, not to use our reason in particular inquiries, but to captivate it in the whole. And if there be any particular inquiries, let them seem what they will to my reason, it matters not ; I am to follow God, not man ; I may be deceived by myself, but never by God. It is therefore sufficient to me that it is in the Scriptures. I will inquire no further. This therefore is a concluding argument ; This is in the Scripture, therefore this is true : and this is against Scripture, therefore it is absurd, and unreasonable.

14. (6.) After all, experience is our competent guide, and warning to us : for we see when witty men use their reason against God that gave it, they in pursuit of reason go beyond religion ; and when by reason they look for God, they miss him ; for he is not to be found but by faith, which when they dispute for, they find not ; because she is built and persuaded by other mediums, than all schools of philosophy to this day have taught. And it was because of reason, that the religion of Jesus was so long opposed and hindered to possess the world. The philosophers would use their reason, and their reason would not admit this new religion : and therefore St. Paul being to remove every stone that hindered, bade them to beware of "vain philosophy ;" which does not distinguish one kind of philosophy from another, but marks all philosophy. It is all vain, when the inquiries are into religious mysteries.

15. (7.) For is it not certain that some principles of reason are against some principles of faith and Scripture? and it is but reason, that we should hear reason wherever we find it; and yet we are to have no intercourse with devils, though we were sure they would tell us of hidden treasures, or secrets of philosophy: and upon this account it is that all genethliacal predictions and judicial astrology are decried by all religious persons; for though there be great pretensions of reason and art, yet they being against religion and revelation are intolerable. In these and the like cases, reason must put on her muffler, and we must be wholly conducted by revelation.

16. These are the pretences against the use of reason in questions of religion; concerning which the same account may be given, as by the Pyrrhonians and sceptics concerning their arguments against the certainty of sciences. These reasons are like physic, which if it uncertainly purges out the humour, it most certainly purges out itself: and these arguments either cannot prevail against the use of reason in religion, or if they do, they prevail against themselves: for either it is against religion to rely upon reason in religion, or it is not: if it be not, then reason may without danger to religion be safely relied upon in all such inquiries. But if it be against religion to rely upon reason, then certainly these reasons intended to prove it so, are not to be relied upon; or else this is no question of religion. For if this be a question of religion, why are so many reasons used in it? If it be no question of religion, then we may, for all these reasons to the contrary, still use our reason in religion without prejudice to it. And if these reasons conclude right, then we may, for these reasons' sake, trust the proposition which says, that in religion reason is to be used; but if these reasons do not conclude right, then there is no danger, but that reason may still be used, these arguments to the contrary notwithstanding.

17. But there is more in it than so: This foregoing discourse, or to the like purpose, is used by two sorts of persons; the one is by those, who in destitution of particular arguments, make their last recourse unto authority of men. For by how much more they press their own peremptory affirmative, by so much the less will they endure your rea-

sons and arguments for the negative. But to these men I shall only say, ‘ Let God be true, and every man a liar :’ and therefore if we trust men concerning God, we do not trust God concerning men ; that is, if we speak of God as men please, we do not think of men as God hath taught us ; viz., that they are weak, and that they are liars : and they who have, by artifices and little devices, acquired to themselves a reputation, take the less care for proving what they say, by how much the greater credulity that is, by which men have given themselves up to be possessed by others. And if I would have my saying to prevail whether it be right or wrong, I shall the less endure that any man should use his own reason against me. And this is one of the great evils for which the church of Rome hath given Christendom a great cause to complain of her, who not only presses men to believe or to submit to what she says upon her own authority, without enduring them to examine whether she says true or no, but also requires as great an assent to what she cannot prove, as to what she can ; requiring an adherence not less than the greatest, even to those things which she only pretends to be able to prove by prudential motives. Indeed in these cases if they can obtain of men to bring their faith, they are safe ; but to come accompanied with their reason too, that is dangerous.

18. The other sort of men, is of those who do the same thing under another cover ; for they not having obtained the advantages of union or government, cannot pretend to a privileged authority : but resolving to obtrude their fancies upon the world, and yet not being able to prove what they say, pretend the Spirit of God to be the author of all their theorems. If they could prove him to be their author, the thing were at an end, and all the world were bound to lay their necks under that pleasant yoke ; but because they cannot prove any thing, therefore it is that they pretend the Spirit for every thing : and if the noise of so sacred a name will persuade you, you are within the snare ; if it will not, you are within their hatred. But it is impossible that these men can prevail, because there are so many of them ; it is as if it were twenty mountebanks in the piazza, and all saying they had the only antidote in the world for poison ; and that what was not theirs, was not at all, and yet all pretend severally.

For all men cannot have the Spirit, unless all men speak the same thing: it were possible that even in union they might be deceivers: but in division they cannot be right; and therefore since all these men pretend the Spirit, and yet all speak several things and contradictory, they do well to desire of us not to use our reason; for if we do, they can never hope to prevail; if we do not, they may persuade, as they meet with fools, that were not possessed before.

¶ 19. Between these two there is a third that pretends to no authority on one hand, nor enthusiasm on the other; but offers to prove what he says, but desires not his arguments to be examined by reason, upon pretence that he urges Scripture; that is, in effect, he must interpret it; but your reason shall not be judge whether he says right or wrong: for if you judge his interpretation, he says you judge of his argument, and make reason umpire in questions of faith: and thus his sect is continued, and the systems of divinity rely upon a certain number of propositions from generation to generation, and the scholar shall be no wiser than his master for ever; because he is taught to examine the doctrines of his master by his master's arguments, and by no other. In effect, they all agree in this, they would rule all the world by religion, and they would have nobody wiser than themselves, but be fools and slaves, till their turn come to use others as bad as they have been used themselves: and therefore, as the wolves offered peace to the sheep upon condition they would put away their dogs; so do these men allow us to be Christians and disciples, if we will lay aside our reason, which is that guard of our souls, whereby alone we can be defended against their tyrannies and pretensions.

20. That I may therefore speak close to the inquiry, I premise these considerations:

(1.) It is a weak and a trifling principle, which supposes faith and reason to be opposite: for faith is but one way, by which our reason is instructed, and acquires the proper notices of things. For our reason or understanding apprehends things three several ways: the first is called *vōnōs*, or the 'first notices' of things abstract, of principles and the 'primo intelligibilia,' such as are, The whole is greater than the half of the whole;—Good is to be chosen;—God is to be loved:—Nothing can be and not be at the same time;—

for these are objects of the simple understanding, congenite notices, concreated with the understanding. The second is called *διανόησις*, or ‘discourse,’ that is, such consequents and emanations which the understanding draws from her first principles. And the third is *πίστις*, that is, such things which the understanding assents to upon the report, testimony, and affirmation, of others, viz., by arguments extrinsical to the nature of the thing, and by collateral and indirect principles. For example, I naturally know that an idol or a false god is nothing ; that is *νόησις*, or the act of abstract and immaterial reason. From hence I infer, that an idol is not to be worshipped : this my reason knows by *διανόησις*, or illation and inference, from the first principle. But therefore, that all monuments of idolatry are to be destroyed, was known to the Jews by *πίστις*, for it was not primely known, nor by the direct force of any thing that was primely known ; but I know it from God by the testimony of Moses, into the notice of which I am brought by collateral arguments, by tradition, by miracle, by voices from heaven, and the like.

21. (2.) These three ways of knowing, are in all faculties sacred and profane : for faith and reason do not divide theology and philosophy, but in every science reason hath notices all these ways. For in natural philosophy there are prime principles, and there are conclusions drawn from thence, and propositions which we believe from the authority of Plato, or Socrates, or Aristotle ; and so it is in theology ; for every thing in Scripture is not, in the divided sense, a matter of faith : that the sun is to rule the day, the moon and the stars to govern the night, I see and feel ; that God is good, that he is one, are prime principles : that nothing but good is to be spoken of this good God, reason draws by a *διανόησις* or discourse and illation : but that this good God will chastise his sons and servants, and that afflictions sent upon us are the issues of his goodness, or that this one God is also three in person, this is known by *πίστις*, or by belief ; for it is not a prime truth, nor yet naturally inferred from a prime truth, but told by God, and therefore is an object of faith ; reason knows it by testimony, and by indirect and collateral probations.

22. (3.) Reason knows all things as they are to be known, and enters into its notices by instruments fitted to the na-

ture of things. Our stock of principles is more limited than our stock of words; and as there are more things than words, so there are more ways of knowing than by principles direct and natural. Now as God teaches us many things by natural principles, many by experience, many at first, many more in time; some by the rules of one faculty, some by the rules of another; so there are some things which descend upon us immediately from heaven, and they communicate with no principle, with no matter, with no conclusion here below. Now as in the other things we must come to notices of things, by deriving them from their proper fountains; so must we do in these. He that should go to revelation to prove that nine and nine make eighteen, would be a fool; and he would be no less, that goes about to prove a trinity of persons by natural reason. Every thing must be derived from its own fountain. But because these things, which are derivatives from heaven, and communicate not at all with principles of philosophy or geometry, yet have their proper fountains, and these fountains are too high for us to search into their bottom, we must plainly take all emanations from them, just as they descend. For in this case, all that is to be done, is to inquire from whence they come. If they come from natural principles, I search for them by direct arguments: if they come from higher, I search for them by indirect arguments; that is, I inquire only for matter of fact, whether they come thence or no. But here my reason is set on work; first, I inquire into the testimony or ways of probation, if they be worth believing in what they say, my reason sucks it in. As if I be told that God said, 'There are three and one in heaven,' I ask, Who said it? Is he credible? Why? If I find that all things satisfy my reason, I believe him saying that God said so; and then *πίστις* or faith enters. I believe the thing also, not because I can prove it directly, for I cannot,—but I can prove it indirectly; testimony and authority are my argument, and that is sufficient. The apostles entered into much of their faith by their senses, they saw many articles of their creed; but as they which saw and believed were blessed, so they which see not, but are argued and disputed into their faith, and believe what they find reasonable to believe, shall have the reward of their faith, while they wisely follow their reason.

23. (4.) Now in all this, here is no difference in my reason, save that as it does not prove a geometrical proposition by moral philosophy, so neither does it prove a revelation by a natural argument, but into one and the other it enters by principles proper to the inquisition; and faith and reason are not opposed at all. Faith and natural reason are several things, and arithmetical and moral reasons are as differing, but it is reason that carries me to objects of faith, and faith is my reason so disposed, so used, so instructed.

The Result of these Propositions is this one :

24. That into the greatest mysteriousness of our religion, and the deepest articles of faith, we enter by our reason: not that we can prove every one of them by natural reason: for to say that, were as vain, as to say we ought to prove them by arithmetic or rules of music; but whosoever believes wisely and not by chance, enters into his faith by the hand of reason; that is, he hath causes and reasons why he believes. He indeed that hath reasons insufficient and incompetent, believes indeed not wisely, but for some reason or other he does it; but he that hath none, does not believe at all: for the understanding is a rational faculty, and therefore every act of the understanding is an act of the rational faculty, and that is an act of reason; as vision is of the visive faculty: and faith, which is an act or habit of the understanding consenting to certain propositions for the authority of the speaker, is also as much an act of reason, as to discourse in a proposition of Aristotle. For faith, assenting to a proposition for a reason drawn 'à testimonio,' is as very a discourse, as to assent to a proposition for a reason drawn from the nature of things. It is not less an act of reason, because it uses another topic. And all this is plain and certain, when we discourse of faith formally in its proper and natural capacity, that is, as it is a reception of propositions 'à testimonio.'

25. Indeed if we consider faith as it is a habit infused by God, and by God's Holy Spirit, so there is something more in it than thus: for so, faith is a vital principle, a magazine of secret truths, which we could never have found out by natural reason, that is, by all that reason which is born with us, and by all that reason that grows with us, and by all secular experiences and conversations with the world;

but of such things which God only teaches, by ways supernatural and divine.

26. Now here is the close and secret of the question, whether or no faith, in this sense, and materially taken, be contrary to our worldly or natural reason,—or whether is any or all the propositions of faith to be exacted, interpreted, and understood, according to this reason materially taken? that is, are not our reasons, which we rightly follow in natural philosophy, in metaphysics, in other arts and sciences, sometimes contrary to faith? and if they be, whether shall be followed? Or can it, in any sense, be an article of faith, if it be contrary to right reason? I answer to this by several propositions.

27. (1.) Right reason (meaning our right reason, or human reason) is not the affirmative or positive measure of things divine, or of articles and mysteries of faith; and the reasons are plain: 1. Because many of them depend upon the free will of God; for which, till he gives us reasons, we are to be still and silent, admiring the secret, and adoring the wisdom, and expecting till the curtain be drawn, or till Elias come and tell us all things. But he,—that will inquire and pry into the reason of the mystery, and because he cannot perceive it, will disbelieve the thing, or undervalue it, and say it is not at all, because he does not understand the reason of it, and why it should be so,—may as well say, that his prince does not raise an army in time of peace, because he does not know a reason why he should; or that God never did suffer a brave prince to die ignobly, because it was a thousand pities he should. There is a ‘ragione di stato,’ and a ‘ragione di regno,’ and a ‘ragione di cielo,’ after which none but fools will inquire, and none but the humble shall ever find.

28. Who can tell why the devil, who is a wise and intelligent creature, should so spitefully, and for no end but for mischief, tempt so many souls to ruin, when he knows it can do him no good, no pleasure, but fantastic? or who can tell why he should be delighted in a pleasure that can be nothing but fantastic, when he knows things by intuition, not by phantasm, and hath no low conceit of things as we have? or why he should do so many things against God, whom he knows he cannot hurt,—and against souls, whose ruin cannot add one

moment of pleasure to him ? and if it makes any change, it is infinitely to the worse : that these things are so, our religion tells us ; but our reason cannot reach why it is so, or how. Whose reason can give an account why, or understand it to be reasonable, that God should permit evil for good ends, when he hates that evil, and can produce that good without that evil ? and yet that he does so we are taught by our religion. Whose reason can make it intelligible, that God who delights not in the death of a sinner, but he and his Christ, and all their angels, rejoice infinitely in the salvation of a sinner, yet that he should not cause that every sinner should be saved, working in him a mighty and a prevailing grace, without which grace he shall not in the event of things be saved, and yet this grace is wholly his own production ?

— Omnipotens hominem cum gratia salvat,
Ipsa suum consummat opus, cui tempus agendi
Semper adest quæ gesta velit ; non moribus illi
Fit mora, non causis anceps suspenditur ullis^a.

Why does not he work in us all to will and to do, not only that we can will, but that we shall will? for if the actual willing be any thing, it is his creation ; we can create nothing, we cannot will unless he effect it in us : and why he does not do that which so well pleases him, and for the want of the doing of which he is so displeased, and yet he alone is to do it some way or other ; human reason cannot give a wise or a probable account.

Nam prius immites populos urbesque rebelles,
Vincente obstantes animos pietate, subegit ;
Non hoc consilio tantum hortatique benigno
Suadens atque docens, quasi normam legis haberet
Gratia, sed mutans intus mentem atque reformans,
Vasque novum ex fracto fingens, virtute creandi.
Non istud monitus legis, non verba prophetæ,
Non præstanta sibi præstat natura, sed unus
Quod fecit reficit. Percurrat Apostolus orbem,
Prædicet, hortetur, plantet, riget, increpet, instet,
Quaque viam verbo reseratam invenerit, intret ;
Ut tamen his studiis auditor promoveatur,
Non doctor neque discipulus, sed gratia sola
Efficit ——— ^b

Where is the wise discourser, that can tell how it can be, that

^a Prosper. c. 15. de Ingrat.

^b Prosp. de Prædest. 55. cap. 8.

God foreknows certainly what I should do ten years hence, and yet it is free to me at that time, to will or not to will, to do or not to do, that thing? Where is the discerning searcher of secrets, that can give the reason why God should deter, mine, for so many ages before, that Judas should betray Christ, and yet that God should kill him eternally for effecting the divine purpose, and foredetermined counsel? Well may we wonder that God should wash a soul with water, and with bread and wine nourish us up to immortality, and make real impresses upon our spirits by the blood of the vine, and the kidneys of wheat; but who can tell why he should choose such mean instruments to effect such glorious promises? since even the greatest things of this world had not been disproportionate instruments to such effects, nor yet too great for our understanding; and that we are fain to stoop to make these mean elements be even with our faith, and with our understanding. Who can divine, and give us the cause, or understand the reason, why God should give us so great rewards for such nothings, and yet damn men for such insignificant mischiefs, for thoughts, for words, for secret wishes, that effect no evil abroad, but only might have done, or, it may be, were resolved to be inactive: for if the goodness of God be so overflowing in some cases, we in our reason should not expect, that in such a great goodness there should be so great an aptness to destroy men greatly for little things: and if all mankind should join in search, it could never be told, why God should adjudge the heathen or the Israelites to an eternal hell, of which he never gave them warning, nor created fears great enough, to produce caution equal to their danger; and who can give a reason, why, for temporal and transient actions of sin, the world is to expect never-ceasing torments in hell to eternal ages? That these things are thus, we are taught in Scripture, but here our reason is not instructed to tell why or how; and therefore our reason is not the positive measure of mysteries, and we must believe what we cannot understand.

29. Thus they are to be blamed, who make intricacies and circles in mysterious articles, because they cannot wade through them; it is not to be understood why God should send his only Son from his bosom to redeem us, to pay our price; nor to be told why God should exact a price of him-

self for his own creature ; nor to be made intelligible to us, why he who loved us so well, as to send his Son to save us, should at the same time so hate us, as to resolve to damn us, unless his Son should come and save us. But the Socinians, who conclude that this was not thus, because they know not how it can be thus, are highly to be reproved for their excess in the inquiries of reason, not where she is a competent judge, but where she is not competently instructed ; and that is the second reason.

30. (2.) The reason of man is a right judge always when she is truly informed ; but in many things she knows nothing but the face of the article ; the mysteries of faith are oftentimes like cherubims' heads placed over the propitiatory, where you may see a clear and a bright face and golden wings, but there is no body to be handled ; there is light and splendour upon the brow, but you may not grasp it ; and though you see the revelation clear, and the article plain, yet the reason of it we cannot see at all ; that is, the whole knowledge which we can have here, is dark and obscure ; " We see as in a glass darkly," saith St. Paul ; that is, we can see what, but not why ; and what we do see, is the least part of that which does not appear ; but in these cases our understanding is to submit, and wholly to be obedient, but not to inquire further. " Delicata est illa obedientia, quæ causas quærit." If the understanding will not consent to a revelation, until it see a reason of the proposition, it does not obey at all, for it will not submit, till it cannot choose. In these cases, reason and religion are like Leah and Rachel. reason is fruitful indeed, and brings forth the first-born, but she is blear-eyed, and oftentimes knows not the secrets of her Lord ; but Rachel produces two children, faith and piety, and obedience is midwife to them both, and modesty is the nurse.

31. From hence it follows, that we cannot safely conclude thus, ' This is agreeable to right reason, therefore this is so in Scripture, or in the counsel of God ; ' not that one reason can be against another, when all things are equal, but that the state of things and of discourses is imperfect ; and though it be right reason in such a constitution of affairs, yet it is not so in others : that a man may repel force by force, is right reason, and a natural right, but yet it follows not, that it can be lawful for a private

Christian to do it, or that Christ hath not forbidden us to strike him that strikes us. The reason of the difference is this; In nature it is just that it be so, because we are permitted only to nature's provisions, and she hath made us equal, and the condition of all men indifferent; and therefore we have the same power over another, that he hath over us; besides, we will do it naturally: and till a law forbade it, it could not be amiss, and there was no reason in nature to restrain it, but much to warrant it. But since the law of God hath forbidden it, he hath made other provisions for our indemnity, and where he permits us to be defenceless (as in cases of martyrdom and the like), he hath promised a reward to make infinite amends: so that 'we may repel force by force,' says nature: 'we may not,' says Christ, and yet they are not two contradictory propositions. For nature says we may, when otherwise we have no security, and no reward for suffering; but Christ hath given both the defence of laws and authority, and the reward of heaven, and therefore in this case it is reasonable. And thus we cannot conclude, This man is a wicked man because he is afflicted, or his cause is evil because it does not thrive; although it be right reason, that good men ought to be happy and prosperous; because although reason says right in it, yet no reason can wisely conclude, that therefore so it should be in this world, when faith and reason too tell us it may be better hereafter. The result is this,—every thing that is above our understanding, is not therefore to be suspected or disbelieved; neither is any thing to be admitted that is against Scripture, though it be agreeable to right reason, until all information is brought in, by which the sentence is to be made.

32. For as it happens in dreams and madness, where the argument is good, and the discourse reasonable oftentimes; but because it is inferred from weak phantasms, and trifling and imperfect notices of things, and obscure apprehensions, therefore it is not only desultorius and light, but insignificant, and far from ministering to knowledge: so it is in our reason as to matters of religion, it argues well and wisely, but because it is from trifling, or false, or uncertain principles, and unsure information, it oftentimes is but a witty nothing. Reason is an excellent limbec, and will extract rare quintessences, but if you put in nothing but mushrooms, or

eggshells, or the juice of coloquintida, or the filthy gingran, you must expect productions accordingly, useless or unpleasant, dangerous or damnable.

. 33. (3.) Although right reason is not the positive and affirmative measure of any article, yet it is the negative measure of every one. So that, whatsoever is contradictory to right reason, is at no hand to be admitted as a mystery of faith ; and this is certain upon an infinite account :

34. (1.) Because nothing can be true and false at the same time ; otherwise it would follow that there could be two truths contrary to each other : for if the affirmative be true, and the negative true too ; then the affirmative is true and is not true, which were a perfect contradiction, and we were bound to believe a lie, and hate a truth : and yet at the same time, obey what we hate, and consent to what we disbelieve ; no man can serve two such masters.

35. (2.) Out of truth nothing can follow but truth ; whatsoever therefore is truth, this is therefore safe to be followed, because no error can be the product of it. It follows therefore, that by believing one truth, no man can be tied to disbelieve another. Whatsoever therefore is contrary to right reason, or to a certain truth in any faculty, cannot be a truth, for one truth is not contrary to another : if therefore any proposition be said to be the doctrine of Scripture, and confessed to be against right reason, it is certainly not the doctrine of Scripture, because it cannot be true, and yet be against what is true.

36. (3.) All truths are emanations and derivatives from God ; and therefore whatsoever is contrary to any truth, in any faculty whatsoever, is against the truth of God, and God cannot be contrary to himself : for as God is one, so truth is one ; for truth is God's eldest daughter, and so like himself, that God may as well be multiplied, as abstracted truth.

37. (4.) And for this reason God does not only prove our religion, and Jesus Christ prove his mission, by miracles, by holiness, by verification of prophecies, and predictions of future contingencies, and voices from heaven, and apparition of angels, and resurrection from the grave, and fulfilling all that was said of him by the prophets, that our faith might enter into us by discourse, and dwell by love, and be nursed and supported by reason : but also God is pleased to verify his

own proceedings, and his own propositions, by discourses merely like ours, when we speak according to right reason. Thus God convinces^c the peevish people that spake evil of him, by arguing concerning the justice of his ways, and exposes his proceedings to be argued by the same measures and proportions by which he judges us, and we judge one another.

38. (5.) For indeed how can it be possibly otherwise; how can we confess God to be just if we understand it not? but how can we understand him so, but by the measures of justice? and how shall we know that, if there be two justices, one that we know, and one that we know not, one contrary to another? if they be contrary, they are not justice; for justice can be no more opposed by justice, than truth to truth: if they be not contrary, then that which we understand to be just in us, is just in God, and that which is just once, is just for ever in the same case and circumstances: and indeed how is it that we are, in all things of excellency and virtue, to be like God, and to be meek like Christ, ‘to be humble as he is humble,’ and to ‘be pure like God,’ to be just after his example, to be ‘merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful?’ If there is but one mercy, and one justice, and one meekness, then the measure of these, and the reason, is eternally the same. If there be two, either they are not essential to God, or else not imitable by us: and then how can we glorify God, and speak honour of his name, and exalt his justice, and magnify his truth, and sincerity, and simplicity, if truth, and simplicity, and justice, and mercy, in him, are not that thing which we understand, and which we are to imitate? To give an example: I have promised to give my friend a hundred pounds on the calends of March: the day comes, and he expects the donative; but I send him answer, that I did promise so by an open promise and signification, and I had an inclination to do so; but I have also a secret will to keep my money, and instead of that to give him a hundred blows upon his back: if he reproaches me for an unjust and a false person; I have nothing to answer, for I believe he would hardly take it for good payment to be answered with a distinction, and told, I have two wills, an open, and a secret will, and they are contrary to each other: he would tell me that I were a false person for having two wills, and those two wills were indeed but one,

^c Isa. i. 18. v. 3. Ezek. xviii. 25.

nothing but a will to deceive and abuse him. Now this is reason, right reason, the reason of all the world, the measure of all mankind, the measure that God hath given us to understand, and to walk, to live, and to practise, by. And we cannot understand what is meant by hypocrisy, and dissembling, if to speak one thing and not to mean it, be not that hypocrisy. Now put the case, God should call us to give him the glory of his justice and sincerity, of the truth of his promises, and the equity of his ways, and should tell us, that we perish by our own fault, and if we will die, it is because we will die, not because we must; because we choose it, not because he forces us; for he calls us, and offers us life and salvation, and gives us powers, and time, and advantages, and desires it really, and endeavours it passionately, and effects it materially, so far as it concerns his portion: this is a certain evidence of his truth and justice; but if we can reply, and say, It is true, O God, that thou dost call us, but dost never intend we should come; that thy open will is loving and plausible, but thy secret will is cruel, decretry, and destructive, to us, whom thou hast reprobated; that thy open will is ineffective, but thy secret will only is operative, and productive of a material event, and therefore although we are taught to say, "Thou art just, and true in all thy sayings," yet certainly it is not that justice which thou hast commanded us to imitate and practise, it is not that sincerity which we can safely use to one another, and therefore either we men are not just when we think we are; or else thou art not just who doest and speakest contrary things, or else there are two contrary things which may be called justice.

39. For let it be considered as to the present instance; God cannot have two wills, it is against the unity of God, and the simplicity of God. If there were two divine wills, there were two Gods; and if it be one will, then it cannot, at the same time, will contrary things; and if it does not, then when God says one thing, and yet he wills it not, it is because he only wills to say it, and not to do it; and if to say this thing of the good, the just, the true, the righteous Judge of all the world be not blasphemy, I know not what is.

40. The purpose of this instance is to exemplify, that in all virtues and excellences there is a perfect unity: and

because all is originally and essentially in God, and from him derived to us, and all our good, our mercy, our truth, our justice, is but an imitation of his, it follows demonstratively, that what is unjust in men, and what is falsehood in our intercourses, is therefore false or unjust, because it is contrary to the eternal pattern: and therefore whatsoever our reason does rightly call unjust, or hypocrisy, or falsehood, must needs be infinitely far from God; and those propositions which asperse God with any thing of this nature, are so far from being the word of God, or an article of faith, or a mystery of religion, that it is blasphemous and false, hateful to God and good men.

41. In these things there is the greater certainty, because there is the less variety and no mystery; these things which in God we adore as attributes, being the lines of our duty, the limits and scores we are to walk by; therefore as our reason is here best instructed, so it cannot easily be deceived, and we can better tell what is right reason in these things, than in questions not so immediately relative to duty and morality.

42. But yet this rule also holds in every thing where reason is, or can be, right; but with some little difference of expression, but generally thus:

43. (1.) Whatsoever right reason says cannot be done, we cannot pretend from Scripture, that it belongs to God's almighty power to do it; it is no part of the divine omnipotency, to do things contradictory; for that is not to be done which is not, and it is no part of power to do that which is not an act or effect of power. Now in every contradictory, one part is a nonentity, a nothing, and therefore by power cannot be produced; and to suppose it producible, or possible to be effected by an almighty power, is to suppose an almighty power to be no power, or to do that which is not the effect of power.

44. But I need say no more of this, for all men grant it, and all sects and varieties of Christians endeavour to clear their articles from inferring contradictions, as implicitly confessing, that it cannot be true, to which any thing that is true, is contradictory. Only some men are forced by their interest and opinions to say, that although to human reason some of their articles seem to have in them contradictions,

yet it is the defect of their reason, and their faith is the more excellent, by how much reason is more at a loss. So do the Lutherans about the ubiquity of Christ's body, and the Papists about transubstantiation, and the Calvinists about absolute reprobation, as being resolved upon the propositions, though heaven and earth confute them. For if men can be safe from argument with such a little artifice as this, then no error can be confuted, then there is nothing so absurd but may be maintained, and a man's reason is useless in inquiry and in probation; and (which is to me very considerable) no man can, in any article, be a heretic, or sin against his conscience. For to speak against the words of Scripture, is not directly against our conscience, there are many ways to escape, by interpretation or authority; but to profess an article against our reason, is immediately against our conscience; for reason and conscience dwell under the same roof, and eat the same portions of meat, and drink the same chalice: the authority of Scripture is superinduced, but right reason is the eternal word of God; "The kingdom of God, that is within us;" and the best portions of Scripture, even the law of Jesus Christ, which in moral things is the eternal law of nature, is written in our hearts, is reason, and that wisdom to which we cannot choose but assent; and therefore in whatsoever he goes against his reason, he must needs go against his conscience, because he goes against that, by which he supposes God did intend to govern him, reason not having been placed in us as a snare and a temptation, but as a light and a star to lead us by day and night. It is no wonder that men maintain absurd propositions, who will not hear great reason against them, but are willing to take excuses and pretences for the justification of them.

45. (2.) This is not to be understood, as if God could do nothing, but what we can with our reason comprehend or know how. For God can do every thing, but we cannot understand every thing: and therefore infinite things there are, or may be, which our reason cannot master; they are above our understanding, but are to be entertained by faith. It is not to be said or believed, that God can do what right reason says cannot be: but it must be said and believed that God can do those things, to which our understanding cannot, by all its powers ministered here below, attain. For since

God is omnipotent, unless we were omniscient, we could not understand all that he can do; but although we know but little, yet we know some propositions which are truths taught us by God, and they are the measures whereby we are to speak and believe concerning the works of God.

46. For it is to be considered, whatsoever is above our understanding, is not against it: ‘supra’ and ‘secundum’ may consist together in several degrees: thus we understand the divine power of working miracles, and we believe and know God hath done many: and although we know not how our dead bones shall live again, yet our reason tells us, that it is within the power of God to effect it; and therefore our faith need not be troubled to believe it. But if a thing be against our understanding, it is against the work of God, and against a truth of God, and therefore is no part, and it can be no effect of the divine power: many things in nature are above our understanding, and no wonder if many things in grace are so too; “The peace of God passeth all understanding,” yet we feel something of it, and hope for more, and long for all, and believe what we yet cannot perceive. But I consider further: .

47. There are some things in reason which are certainly true, and some things which reason does infallibly condemn: our blessed Saviour’s argument was certain, “A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye perceive me to have:” therefore I am no spirit: and St. John’s argument was certain, “That which we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and which our hands have handled of the Word of life, that we preach,” that is, we are to believe what we see and hear and feel; and as this is true in the whole religion, so it is true in every article of it. If right sense and right reason tell us clearly, that is, tell us so that there is no absurdness, or contradiction, or unreasonableness, in it, we are to believe it, as we are to believe God; and if an angel from heaven should tell us any thing against these propositions, I do not doubt but we would reject him. Now if we inquire what things are certainly true or false; I must answer, that in the first place I reckon prime principles and contradictions: in the next place, those things which are manifestly absurd: but if it be asked further, which things are manifestly absurd, and what it is to be manifestly absurd? there can no more

be given to this, than to him who asks, How shall I know whether I am in light or in darkness? If therefore it be possible for men to dote in such things as these, their reason is useless in its greatest force and highest powers: it must therefore be certain, that if the parts of a contradiction or a right reason be put in bar against a proposition, it must not pretend to be an article of faith; and to pretend God's omnipotency against it, is to pretend his power against his truth. God can deliver us from our enemies, when to human reason it seems impossible, that is, when we are destitute of all natural help, and proper causes and probabilities of escape, by what we see or feel; that is, when it is impossible to men, it may be possible with God; but then the faith which believes that God can do it, is also very right reason: and if we hope he will do it, there is more than faith in it, but there is nothing in it beyond reason, except love also be there.

48. The result is this: (1.) Our reason is below many of the works, and below all the power, of God, and therefore cannot perceive all that God hath, or can, or will do, no more than an owl can stare upon the body of the sun, or tell us what strange things are in that immense globe of fire. But when any thing that is possible, is revealed, reason can consent; but if reason cannot consent to it when it is told of it, then it is nothing, it hath no being, it hath no possibility; whatsoever is in our understanding, is in being: for that which is not, is not intelligible; and to what reason cannot consent, in that no being can be supposed.

49. (2.) Not only what is impossible to reason, is possible in faith, but if any thing be really absurd or unreasonable, that is, against some truth, in which human reason is really instructed, that is a sufficient presumption against a proposition, that it cannot be an article of faith. For even this very thing, I mean, an avoiding of an absurdity, or an inconvenience, is the only measure and rule of interpreting very many places of Scripture. For why does not every Christian pull out his right eye, or cut off his hand, and leg, that he might enter into heaven halt and blind? why do not we believe that Christ is a door, and a vine, and a stone, since these things are dogmatically affirmed in Scripture? but that we expound scriptures as we confute them who deny prin-

ples, by declaring that such senses or opinions introduce evil and foolish consequents, against some other truth in some faculty or other in which human reason is rightly taught. Now the measure and the limit of this, is that very thing which is the reason of this, and all the preceding discourse,— One truth cannot be against another:—if therefore your opinion or interpretation be against a truth, it is false, and no part of faith. A commandment cannot be against a revelation, a privilege cannot be against a promise, a threatening cannot mean against an article, a right cannot be against a duty; for all reason, and all right, and all truth, and all faith, and all commandments, are from God, and therefore partake of his unity and his simplicity.

50. (3.) This is to be enlarged with this advice, that in all questions of the sense of Scripture, the ordinary way is to be presumed before the extraordinary: and if the plain way be possible, and reasonable, and useful, and the extraordinary of no other use, but to make wonder and strangeness to the belief of the understanding, we are to presume for that, and to let this alone, because that hath the advantage of reason, it being more reasonable that God will keep the methods of his own creation, and bring us to him by ways with which we are acquainted, and by which we can better understand our way to him, than that he will do a miracle to no purpose, and without necessity; God never doing any thing for the ostentation, but very many things for the manifestation, of his power: for his wisdom and his power declare each other, and in every thing where he shews his mightiness, he also shews his wisdom, that is, he never does any thing without great reason. And therefore the Roman doctrine of the holy sacrament suffers an intolerable prejudice, because it supposes daily heaps and conjugations of miracles, wholly to no purpose; since the real body can be taken by them to whom it does no good; and all the good can be conveyed to us, though the body be only taken in a spiritual sense; all the good being conveyed by moral instruments, and to spiritual effect; and therefore the ordinary way, and the sense which the church of England gives, is infinitely to be preferred, because it supposes no violences and effects of miracles, no cramps and convulsions to reason: and a man may receive the holy sacrament, and discourse of all its effects and mysteriousnesses.

though he do not talk like a madman, or a man going out of his wits, and a stranger to all the reason and philosophy of the world : and therefore it is remarkable, that there is in our faith no article, but what is possible to be effected by the ordinary power of God : that a virgin should conceive is so possible to God's power, that it is possible in nature, say the Arabians ; but however, he that made the virgin out of nothing, can make her produce something out of something : and for the resurrection of the dead, it is certainly less than the creation, and it is like that which we see every year, in the resurrection of plants and dead corn, and is in many degrees imitable by art, which can out of ashes raise a flower. And for all the articles of our creed, they are so far from being miraculous and strange to reason, that the greatest wonder is, that our belief is so simple and facile, and that we shall receive so great and prodigious events hereafter, by instruments so fitted to the weakest capacities of men here below. Indeed some men have so scorned the simplicity of the Gospel, that because they thought it honourable to have every thing strange and unintelligible, they have put in devices and dreams of miracles of their own, and have so explicated them, that as without many miracles they could not be verified, so without one, they can hardly be understood. That which is easy to reason, and most intelligible, is more like the plainness, and truth, and innocence, and wisdom, of the Gospel, than that which is bones to philosophy, and iron to the teeth of babes.

51. But this is to be practised with caution ; for every man's reason is not right, and every man's reason is not to be trusted : and therefore,

(4.) As absurd foolish things are not to be obtruded, under the pretence of being mysteries, so neither must mistaken philosophy, and false notices of things, be pretended for reason. There are mistakes on all hands, some Christians explicate their mysteries, and mince them into so many minutes and niceties, and speak of them more than they are taught, more than is said in the Scriptures, or the first creeds, that the article,—which in its own simplicity was indeed mysterious, and not to be comprehended by our dark and less instructed reason, but yet was not impossible to be believed,—is made impossible to be understood by the appendages, and exposed to scorn and violences by heretics and

misbelievers: so is the incarnation of the Son of God, the mysterious Trinity, the presence of Christ in the holy sacrament. For so long as the mysteries are signified in simple, wise, and general terms, reason can espy no particular impossibilities in them: but when men will explicate what they cannot understand, and intricate what they pretend to explicate, and superinduce new clauses to the article, and by entering within the cloud, do less see the light,—they find reason amazed, where she could easily have submitted, and clouds brought upon the main article, and many times the body itself is supposed to be a phantasm, because of its tinsel and fairy dressing: and on the other side, he that would examine an article of faith, by a proposition in philosophy, must be careful that his philosophy be as right as he pretends. For as it will be hard to expect, that right reason should submit to a false article, upon pretence it is revealed, so it will be as hard to distrust an article, because it is against a false proposition, which I was taught in those schools of learning, who speak things by custom, or by chance, or because they are taught, and because they are not suffered to be examined. Whosoever offers at a reproof of reason, must be sure that he is right in the article, and that must be upon the strength of stronger reason; and he that offers by reason to reprove a pretended article, must be sure his reason must be greater than the reverence of that pretension.

52. And therefore Holy Scriptures command us in those cases to such purposes, as not only teach us what to do in it, but also confirm the main inquiry; for therefore we are commanded to “try all things;” suppose that be meant that we try them by Scriptures; how can we so try them, but by comparing line with line, by considering the consequents of every pretence, the analogy of faith, the measures of justice, the laws of nature, essential right, and prime principles? And all this is nothing but by making our faith the limit of our reason, in matters of duty to God; and reason the minister of faith, and things that concern our duty. The same is intended by those other words of another apostle, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try if the spirits be of God;” how can this be tried? By Scripture? Yea; but how if the question be of the sense of Scripture, as it is gene-

rally at this day? Then it must be tried by something extrinsical to the question, and whatsoever you can call to judgment, reason must still be your solicitor and your advocate and your judge; only reason is not always the law, sometimes it is, for so our blessed Saviour was pleased to say, “Why of yourselves do you not judge that which is reasonable?” For so δίκαιον there is used, ‘that which is fitting and consonant to reason;’ and in proportion to this it was, that so much of the religion of Jesus was clothed with parables, as if the theorems and propositions themselves were clothed with flesh and blood, and conversed after the manner of men, to whom reason is the law and the rule, the guide and the judge, the measure of good and evil for this life, and for that which is to come. The consequent is this:

53. He that says thus, ‘This doctrine is against the word of God, and therefore it is absurd and against reason,’ may, as it falls out, say true; but his proposition will be of no use, because reason is before revelation, and that this is revealed by God, must be proved by reason. But,

54. He that says, ‘This is absurd, or this is against reason, therefore this is against the word of God,’ if he says true in the antecedent, says true in the consequent, and the argument is useful in the whole, it being the best way to interpret difficult scriptures, and to establish right senses, and to confute confident heresies. For when both sides agree that these are the words of God, and the question of faith is concerning the meaning of the words, nothing is an article of faith, or a part of the religion, but what can be proved by reasons to be the sense and intentions of God. Reason is never to be pretended against the clear sense of Scripture, because by reason it is that we came to perceive that to be the clear sense of Scripture. And against reason, reason cannot be pretended; but against the words of Scripture produced in a question, there may be great cause to bring reason; for nothing seems plainer than those words of St. James, “Above all things, my brethren, swear not at all” and yet reason interposes and tells us, that plain words must not be understood against plain reason and plain necessity: for if oaths before magistrates were not permitted and allowed, it were necessary to examine all men by tor-

ture ; and yet neither so could they so well be secured of truth as they can by swearing. What is more plain than the words of St. Paul^g? Νεκρώσατε τὰ μέλη ἡμῶν, τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, “ Mortify (or kill) your members, that are upon the earth;” and yet reason tells us, that we must not hurt or destroy one limb ; and wherever the effect would be intolerable, there the sense is still unreasonable ; and therefore not a part of faith, so long as it is an enemy to reason, which is the elder sister, and the guide and guardian of the younger.

55. For as when the tables of the law were broken by Moses, God would make no new ones, but bade Moses provide some stones of his own, and he would write them over : so it is in our religion ;—when God with the finger of his Spirit writes the religion and the laws of Jesus Christ, he writes them in the tables of our reason, that is, “in the tables of our hearts.”—‘Homo cordatus,’ ‘a wise, rational man,’ sober, and humble, and discursive, hath the best faith : but the *ἄτοποι* (as St. Paul calls them) “the unreasonable,” they are such who “have no faith^h,” for the Christian religion is called by St. Paul λογικὴ λατρεία, “a reasonable worship ;” and the word of God is called by St. Peterⁱ, γάλα λογικὸν ἄδολόν, “the reasonable and uncrafty milk ;” it is full of reason, but it hath no tricks, it is rational, but not crafty, it is wise and holy : and he that pretends there are some things in our religion, which right reason cannot digest and admit, makes it impossible to reduce atheists, or to convert Jews and heathens. But if reason invites them in, reason can entertain them all the day.

And now to the arguments brought against the use of reason ; the answers may easily be gathered from the premises :

56. To the first I answer, that reason is the eye of the soul in all things, natural, moral, and religious ; and faith is the light of that eye, in things pertaining to God ; for it is true, that natural reason cannot teach us the things of God : that is, reason instructed only by this world, which St. Paul calls “the natural man,”—cannot discern the things of the Spirit, for they are “spiritually discerned :” that is, that they are taught and perceived by the aids of God’s Spirit, by revelation and divine assistances, and grace : but though

^g Coloss. iii. 5.

^h 2 Thess. iii. 2.

ⁱ 1 Pet. ii. 2.

natural reason cannot, yet it is false to say that reason cannot; for reason illuminated can perceive the things of God; that is, when reason is taught in that faculty, under that master, and by those rules which are proper for spiritual things, then reason can do all its intentions.

57. To the second I answer, that therefore humility and piety are the best dispositions, to the understanding the secrets of the Gospel.

(1.) Because these do remove those prejudices and obstructions which are bars and fetters to reason; and the humble man does best understand, because the proud man will not inquire, or he will not labour, or he will not understand any proposition that makes it necessary for him to lay aside his employment or his vanity, his interest or his vice.

(2.) These are indeed excellent dispositions to understanding, the best moral instruments, but not the best natural; if you are to dispute against a heathen, a good reason will sooner convince him than an humble thought; if you be to convert a Jew, an argument from the old prophets is better to him than three or four acts of a gracious comportment.

(3.) Sometimes by way of blessing and reward, God gives understanding to good persons, which to the evil he denies; but this which effects any thing by way of divine blessing, is not to be supposed the best natural instrument. Thus the divines say, that the fire of hell shall torment souls, "tanquam instrumentum divinæ voluntatis," as the instrument in the hand of a voluntary and almighty agent, but not as a thing apportioned properly to such an event,—for the worm of conscience is more apt to that purpose.

(4.) And when we compare man with man, so it is true that the pious man should be sooner instructed than the impious, 'cæteris paribus'; but if we compare discourse and piety, reason and humility, they excel each other in their several kinds, as wool is better than a diamond, and yet a diamond is to be preferred before a bag of wool; they operate to the same purpose of understanding in several manners: and whereas it is said in the argument, that "the doctrine of the cross was foolishness to the Greeks," it is true, but nothing to the present question. For therefore it was foolishness to them, because they had not been taught in the secrets of God, they

were not instructed how God would, by a way so contrary to flesh and blood, cause the spirits of just men to be made perfect. And they who were wise by Plato's philosophy, and only well skilled in Aristotle, could do nothing in the schools of Jesus, because they were not instructed in those truths by which such proceedings were to be measured; but still, reason is the great wheel, though according as the motion was intended, new weights must be proportioned accordingly.

58. The third objection presses upon the point of duty, and 'because the Scripture requires obedience of understanding, and submitting our most imperious faculties, therefore reason is to be excluded:' to this I answer, that we must submit our understanding to God, is very true, but that is only when God speaks. But because we heard him not, and are only told that God did speak, our reason must examine whether it be fit to believe them that tell us so; for some men have spoken falsely, and we have great reason to believe God, when all the reason in the world commands us to suspect the offerings of some men; and although we ought, for the greatest reasons, submit to God, yet we must judge and discern the sayings of God, from the pretences of men; and how that can be done without using our reason in the inquiries of religion, is not yet discovered; but for the obedience of understanding, it consists in these particulars:

*The Particulars in which Obedience of Understanding
consists.*

59. (1.) That we submit to God only and not to man; that is, to God wherever it appears reasonable to be believed that he hath spoken,—but never to man, unless he hath authority from reason or religion to command our conformity.

60. (2.) That those things which, by the abuse and pretence of reason, are passed into a fictitious and usurped authority, make no part of our religion; for because we are commanded to submit our understanding to God, therefore we must "call no man master upon earth;" therefore it is certain that we must not believe the reports or opinions of men against a revelation of God. He that communicates with holy bread only, and gives not the chalice to all God's people that require the holy communion, does openly adhere to

a fond custom and authority of abused men, and leaves the express, clearest, undeniable institution of God.

61. (3.) When reason and revelation seem to disagree, let us so order ourselves, that so long as we believe this to be a revelation, no pretence or reason may change our belief from it: if right or sufficient reason can persuade us that this is not a revelation,—well and good; but if reason leaves us in the actual persuasion that it is so, we must force our reason to comply with this, since no reason does force us to quit this wholly; and if we cannot quit our reason or satisfy it, let us carry ourselves with modesty, and confess the revelation, though with profession of our ignorance and unskilfulness to reconcile the two litigants.

62. (4.) That whatsoever is clearly and plainly told us, we obey it, and rest in it, and not measure it by the rules of folly and weak philosophy, or the sayings of men, in which error may be ingredient; but when things are unequal, that is, when we can doubt concerning our reason, and cannot doubt concerning the revelation, we make no question, but prefer this before that.

63. (5.) That in particular inquiries, we so order ourselves as to make this the general measure, that we never do violence to the word of God, or suspect that, but resolve rather to call ourselves liars, than that religion should receive detriment; and rather quit our arguments than hazard an article; that is, that when all things are equal, we rather prefer the pretence of revelation, than the pretences of reason, for the reverence of that and the suspicion of this. Beyond this we can do no more.

64. To the fourth I answer, that it is true, reason is fallible; or rather to speak properly, ratiocination, or the using of reason, is subject to abuse and deception; for reason itself is not fallible; but if reason, that is, reasonings, be fallible, so are the pretences of revelation subject to abuse; and what are we now the nearer? Some reasons are but probable, and some are certain and confessed, and so it is in the sense of scriptures, some are plain and need no interpreter, no discourse, no art, no reasonings, to draw out their sense; but many are intricate and obscure, secret and mysterious; and to use a fallible reasoning to draw out an obscure and uncertain sense of Scripture, is sometimes the best way we

have, and then we must make the best of it we can : but the use of reasoning is not only to find out truth the best we can, but sometimes we are as sure of it, as of light ; but then and always our reason (such as it is) must lead us into such proportions of faith as they can : according as our reason or motives are, so ordinarily is the degree of our faith.

65. To the fifth I need give no other answer but this, that it confesses the main question ; for if this be the greatest reason in the world, ‘ God hath said it, therefore it is true,’ it follows, that all our faith relies upon this one reason ; but because this reason is of no use to us till the minor proposition be reproved, and that it appear that God hath said it, and that in the inquiry after that, we are to use all our reason ;—the consequent is, that in the first and last, reason lends legs to faith,—and nothing can be wisely believed, but what can, by some rational inducement, be proved. As for the last proposition in the objection, ‘ This is against Scripture, therefore it is absurd and unreasonable,’ I have already made it appear to be an imprudent and useless affirmative.

66. The sixth objection complains of them that by weak reasonings lose their religion,—but this is nothing against right reasoning : for because mountebanks and old women kill men by vile physic, therefore is it true, that the wise discourses of physicians cannot minister to health ? Half-witted people talk against God, and make objections against religion, and themselves have not wit or will enough to answer them,—and they intending to make reason to be the positive and affirmative measure of religion, are wholly mistaken, and abuse themselves and others. 2. We are not to exact every thing in religion according to our weak reasonings ; but whatsoever is certain in reason, religion cannot contradict that ; but what is uncertain or imperfect, religion oftentimes does instruct and amend it. But there are many mysteries of religion contrary to reason, corrupted with evil manners ; and many are contrary to reason, corrupted with false propositions ; now these men make objections, which upon their own principles they can never answer : but that which seems impossible to vicious persons, is reason to good men ; and that which children and fools cannot answer, amongst wise men hath no difficulty ; and ‘ the ignorant, and the unstable, wrest some scriptures to their own damna-

tion :’ but concerning the new atheists that pretend to wit, it is not their reason, but their want of reason, that makes them such ; for if either they had more learning, or did believe themselves to have less, they could never be atheists.

67. To the last I answer, (1.) that it is reason we should hear reason wherever we find it, if there be no greater evil brought by the teacher than he can bring good ; but if a heretic preaches good things, it is not always lawful to hear them, unless when we are out of danger of his abuses also. And thus truth from the devil may be heard, if we were out of his danger ; but because he tells truth to evil purposes, and makes wise sayings to become craft, it is not safe to hear him. (2.) But besides this, although it is lawful to believe a truth which the devil tells us, yet it is not lawful to go to school to the devil, or to make inquiries of him ; because he that does so, makes him his master, and gives something of God’s portion to God’s enemy. As for judicial astrology and genethliacal predictions, for my part I therefore reprove them, not because their reason is against religion, for certainly it cannot be ; but because I think they have not reason enough in what they say ; they go upon weak principles which they cannot prove ; they reduce them to practice by impossible mediums ; they draw conclusions with artless and unskilful heads ; they argue about things with which they have little conversation ; they cannot make scientifical progress in their profession, but out of greediness to do something ; they usually, at least are justly suspected to, take in auxiliaries from the spirits of darkness ; they have always spoken uncertainly, and most part falsely ; and have always lived scandalously in their profession : they have by all religions been cried down, trusted by none but fools, and superstitious people ; and therefore, although the art may be very lawful, if the stars were upon the earth, or the men were in heaven, if they had skill in what they profess, and reason in all their pretences, and after all that their principles were certain, and that the stars did really signify future events, and that those events were not overruled by every thing in heaven and in earth, by God, and by our own will and wisdom,—yet because here is so little reason, and less certainty, and nothing but confidence and illusion, therefore it is that religion permits them not ; and it is not

the reason in this art, that is against religion, but the folly or the knavery of it, and the dangerous and horrid consequents, which they feel, that run a whoring after such idols of imagination.

RULE IV.

A Judgment of Nature, or Inclination, is not sufficient to make a sure Conscience.

1. BECAUSE this rule is of good use, not only for making judgment concerning the states of some men, but also in order to many practices, it will not be lost labour to consider that there are three degrees of practical judgment.

2. The first is called an inclination, or the first natural consonancy between the faculty or disposition of man, and some certain actions. All men are naturally pitiful, in some degree, unless their nature be lame and imperfect: as we say, all men naturally can see,—and it is true, if they have good eyes: so all men naturally are pitiful, unless they have no bowels: but some more, some less. And therefore there is in their natures a convenience, or agreeing between their dispositions and acts of charity. 1. In the lowest sort there is an aptness to it. 2. In the sweeter and better natures there is a virtual charity. 3. But in those that consider and choose, and observe the commandment, or the proportions of right reason, there is in these only a formal, deliberative, compound, or practical judgment.

3. Now concerning the first sort, that is, the natural disposition or first propensity, it is but a remote disposition towards a right conscience and a practical judgment; because it may be rescinded, or diverted by a thousand accidents, and is nothing else but a relic of the shipwreck which Adam and all the world have made, and may pass into nothing as suddenly as it came. He that sees two cocks fight, though he have no interest in either, will assist one of them at least by an ineffective pity and desire: but this passes no further than to natural effects, or the changes or affections of a loadstone; it may produce something in nature, but nothing in manners.

4. Concerning the second, that is, a virtual judgment, that is a natural inclination passing forth into habit or custom, and delight in the actions of some virtues ; it is certain that it is one part of the grace of God, and a more promoted and immediate disposition to the virtue of its kind than the former. Some men are naturally very merciful, and some are abstemious, and some are continent : and these in the course of their life take in every argument and accidental motive, and the disposition swells, and the nature is confirmed. But still it is but nature. The man, it may be, is chaste, because he hates the immodesty of those addresses which prepare to uncleanness ; or he loves his quiet, or fears the accidents of his enemy-crime ; or there was a terror infused into him by the sight of a sad spectacle, the evil reward of an adulterous person :

— *quosdam mœchos dum mugilis intrat.* — (Juv. x. 317.)

Concerning this kind of virtual judgment, or confirmed nature, I have two things to say :

5. (1.) That this virtual judgment can produce love or hatred to certain objects, ineffective complacences or disrelishes respectively, proper antipathies and aversations from a whole kind of objects ; such as was that hatred that Tamerlane had to Zercon, or some men to cats. And thus much we cannot deny to be produced by the operation and simple apprehension of our senses by pictures and all impressions of fancy : “ *Cum opinamur difficile aliquid aut terribile, statim compatimur : secundum imaginem autem similiter nos habemus.* ” We find effects and impresses according to the very images of things we see, and by their prime apprehensions : and therefore much rather may these ‘ *actus imperati*,’ or more natural and proper effects and affections of will be entertained or produced respectively. Men at first sight fall in love with women, and that against their reason, and resolution, and counsel, and interest, and they cannot help it ; and so they may do with some actions of virtue. And as in the first case they are rather miserable than vicious ; so in this they are rather fortunate than virtuous : and they may be commended, as we praise a fair face, or a strong arm, an athletic health, or a good constitution ; and it is indeed a

* Vide Aristot. de Anima lib. 2. text. 154.

very good disposition and a facilitation of a virtuous choice. But,

6. (2.) This virtual judgment, which is nothing but nature confirmed by accidents, is not a state of good by which a man is acceptable to God. Neither is it a sufficient principle of a good life, nor indeed of the actions of its own kind. Not of good life, because it may be in a single instance; and it can never be in all. The man that is good-natured, that is naturally meek and loving, goes the furthest upon this account; but without the conjunction of other virtues, it is a great way off from that good state, whither naturally it can but tend and incline: and we see some good things are made to serve some evil; and by temperance, and a moderate diet, some preserve their health, that they may not preserve their chastity: and they may be habitually proud, because they are naturally chaste: and then this chastity is no virtue, but a disposition and an aptness only. In this sense that of St. James may be affirmed, “ He that offends in one, is guilty of all;” that is, if his inclinations, and his accidentally-acquired habits, be such as to admit a mixture, they are not genuine and gracious: such are these that are the effects of a nature fitted towards a particular virtue. It must be a higher principle that makes an entire piety; nature and the habits growing upon her stock, cannot do it. Alexander was a continent prince, and the captive beauties of Persia were secured by it in their honours; but by rage he destroyed his friend, and by drunkenness he destroyed himself.

But neither is this virtual judgment a sufficient principle of the actions of its own kind; for this natural strength is nothing but an uneasiness and unaptness to suffer by common temptations: but place the man where he can be tempted, and this good disposition secures him not, because there may be something in nature bigger than it.

7. It remains then, that to the constitution of a right and sure conscience, there is required a formal judgment, that is, a deliberation of the understanding, and a choice of the will, that being instructed, and this inclined by the grace of God: “ Tantoque laudabilior munificentia nostra fore videbatur, quod ad illam non impetu quodam, sed consilio trahebamur,” said Secundus¹: then it is right and good, then when it is not

¹ Lib. 1. ep. 8. §. 9. Gierig, vol. 1. p. 33.

violent, necessary, or natural, but when it is chosen. This makes a right and sure conscience, because the grace of God hath a universal influence into all the course of our actions. " For he that said, Do not kill, said also, Do not steal :" and if he obeys in one instance, for that reason must obey in all, or be condemned by himself, and then the conscience is right in the principle and fountain, though defiled in the issue and emanation. For he that is condemned by his own conscience, hath the law written and the characters still fair, legible, and read ; but then the fault is in something else ; the will is corrupted. The sum is this :

8. It is not enough that the conscience be taught by nature, but it must be taught by God, conducted by reason, made operative by discourse, assisted by choice, instructed by laws and sober principles ; and then it is right, and it may be sure.

RULE V.

When two Motives concur to the Determination of an Action, whereof one is virtuous, and the other secular, a right Conscience is not prejudiced by that Mixture.

1. HE that fasts to punish himself for his sins, and at the same time intends his health, though it will be very often impossible for him to tell himself which was the final and prevailing motive and ingredient into the persuasion, yet it is no detriment to his conscience ; the religious motive alone did suffice to make it to be an act of a good conscience ; and if the mixture of the other could change this, it could not be lawful to use, or in any degree to be persuaded by, the promises of those temporal blessings which are recorded in both Testaments, and to which there is a natural desire, and proper inclination. But this also is with some difference.

2. If the secular ingredient be the stronger, it is in the same degree as it prevails over the virtuous or religious, a diminution of the worthiness of the action ; but if it be a secular blessing under a promise, it does not alter the whole kind of the action. The reason is this : Because whatever

God hath promised, is therefore desirable and good, because he hath promised it, or he hath promised it because it is of itself good, and useful to us; and therefore whatever we may innocently desire, we may innocently intend: but if it be mingled with a religious and spiritual interest, it ought not to sit down in the highest place, because a more worthy is there present, lest we be found to be passionate for the things of this life, and indifferent for God and for religion.

3. If the secular or temporal ingredient be not under a promise, and yet be the prime and chief motive, the whole case is altered: the conscience is not right, it is natural inclination, not conscience, it is sense or interest, not duty. He that gives alms with a purpose to please his prince, who is charitable and religious, although his purpose be innocent, yet because it is an end which God hath not encouraged by propounding it as a reward of charity, the whole deliberation is turned to be a secular action, and passes without reward. Our blessed Saviour hath, by an instance of his own, determined this case. “When thou makest a feast, call not the rich, who can make thee recompense; but call the poor, and thou shalt have reward in heaven.” To call the rich to a feast is no sin; but to call them is to lose the reward of charity, by changing the whole nature of the action from charity to civility, from religion to prudence.

4. And this hath no other exception or variety in it, but when the mixture is of a thing that is so purely natural, that it is also necessary: thus to eat upon a festival-day to satisfy a long hunger, to be honestly employed to get a living, do not cease to be religious,—though that which is temporal, be the first and the greatest cause of the action or undertaking. But the reason of this difference, if any be apprehended, is because this natural end is also a duty, and tacitly under a promise.

5. Quest. It is usually required, that all that enter into the holy offices of the ministry, should so primely and principally design the glory of God; that all other considerations should scarce be ingredients into the resolution: and yet if it be inquired how far this is obligatory, and observe how little it is attended to in the first preparations to the order, the very needs of most men will make the question material.

But I answer to the question, in proportion to the sense of the present rule.

6. (1.) Wherever a religious act by God's appointment may serve a temporal and a spiritual, to attend either is lawful; but it is still more excellent, by how much preference and greater zeal, we more serve the more excellent. Therefore although it be better to undertake the sacred function wholly for ends spiritual, yet it is lawful to enter into it with an actual design to make that calling the means of our natural and necessary support. The reason is:

7. Because it is lawful to intend what God hath offered and propounded. The end which God hath made, cannot be evil, and therefore it cannot be evil to choose that instrument to that end, which by God's appointment is to minister to that end. Now since "God hath ordained that they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel," it cannot be unlawful to design that in order to this.

8. (2.) If our temporal support and maintenance be the first and immediate design, it makes not the whole undertaking to be unlawful. For all callings, and all states, and all actions, are to be directed or done to the glory of God; according to that saying of St. Paul, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God :" and that one calling should be more for God's glory than another, is by reason of the matter and employment; but in every one, for its portion still, God's glory must be the principal: and yet no man questions but it is lawful for any man to bring his son up to the most gainful trade, if in other things there be no objection; and therefore why this may not be the first moving consideration in the susception of, or designation to, the calling ecclesiastical, cannot have any reason in the nature of the thing: for if in all things God's glory must be the principal end, and yet in some callings the temporal advantage is the first mover, then it may be so in all,—the intention of God's glory notwithstanding: for if it hinders not in that, it hinders not in this. But yet,

9. (3.) It is a great imperfection actually to think of nothing but the temporal advantages, of which God hath in that calling made provisions; but I say, it is not always a sin to make them the first mover in the designing the person to that calling.

10. But therefore this is only tolerable in those persons, who at great distance design the calling; as when they first study to make themselves capable of it, then it is tolerable, because they are bound to provide for themselves in all just ways, and standing at so great distances from it, cannot behold the beauties which are ‘in interiori domo;’ the duty which is on them, is to do that which is their proper work; that is, to fit themselves with abilities and skill to conduct it, and therefore their intention must be fitted accordingly, and move by the most powerful and prevailing motive, so it be lawful. He that applies himself to learn letters, hath an intention proportionable to his person and capacity when he first enters, and as he grows in powers, so must he also in purposes; so that as he passes on to perfection, he may also have intentions more noble and more perfect: and a man in any calling may first design to serve that end that stands next him; and yet when he is possessed of that, look on further to the intention of the thing, and its own utmost capacity. But therefore,

11. (4.) Whosoever does actually enter into orders, must take care that his principal end be the glory of God, and the good of souls. The reasons are these:

12. (1.) Because no man is fit for that office, but he that is spiritual in his person, as well as his office: he must be a despiser of the world, a light to others, an example to the flock, a great denier of himself, of a celestial mind, he must mind heavenly things; with which dispositions it cannot consist, that he who is called to the lot of God, should place his chief affections in secular advantages.

13. (2.) This is that of which the Apostle was a glorious precedent, “We seek not yours, but you; for the parents lay up for the children, not children for their parents^m:” meaning, that between the spiritual and the natural paternity, there is so much proportion, that when it is for the good of the children, they must all quit their temporal advantages; but because this is to be done for the spiritual, it follows, this must be chief.

14. And this I suppose is also enjoined by another apostle, “feeding the flock of God, not for filthy lucre’s sake,” ἀλλὰ πρωτόμας, that is, but “of a prompt, ready mindⁿ;” a

mind moved by intrinsic arguments of fair design, not drawn by the outward cords of vanity and gain.

15. (3.) The work of the calling being principally and immediately for the good of souls, and for the glory of God, it cannot be pursued as the nature of the work requires, if that be not principally intended, which is principally to be procured; all that which is necessary in order to it, must also be taken care of: thus the ministers of religion may attend their health, and must look to their necessary support, and may defend themselves against all impediments of their offices in just and proportionable ways; but because all these have further purposes, although they standing nearest may be first regarded by an actual care, at some times, and in some circumstances, and by actual attention; yet habitually, and principally, and constantly, the glory of God, and the good of souls, must be in the heart, and in the purpose of every action.

16. But the principality and pre-eminence of this intention are no otherwise to be judged of, either by ourselves or others, than by these following significations.

(1.) No man can in any sense principally, that is, as he ought, intend the good of souls, who enters into the sacred ministry without those just measures of preparation and disposition, which are required by the church, and the nature of the thing itself; that is, that he be well instructed in the Holy Scriptures, and be fit to teach, to exhort, to reprove. For he who undertakes a work, which can serve God's end and his own in several capacities, and is not sufficiently instructed to serve the ends of God,—it is apparent that what he undertakes, is for his own end.

17. (2.) His intentions cannot be right, who by any indirect arts does enter, for that which does not begin at God, cannot be for God: “*Non enim ambitione, vel pretio, sed probatæ vitæ et disciplinarum testimonio, ad honoris et sacerdotii insignia oportet promoveri,*” said the emperor Theodosius. He therefore who simoniacally enters, fixes his eye and heart upon that which he values to be worth money, not upon the spiritual employment, between which and money there can be no more proportion, than between contemplation and a cart-rope; they are not things of the same nature; and he that comes into the field with an elephant,

cannot be supposed to intend to hunt a hare: neither can he be supposed to intend principally the ministry of souls, who comes to that office instructed only with a bag of money.

18. (3.) He may be supposed principally to intend the ministry of souls, and in it the glory of God, who so attends to the execution of his office, that it does really and sufficiently minister to the thing. For since the calling is by God really designed to that end, and if the ministers be not wanting to themselves, they are sufficiently enabled and assisted to that purpose; he that zealously and wisely ministers in the office, hath given a most real testimony of his fair intention, because he does that thing so as those intentions only can be effected. The thing itself is sufficient for the end if God blesses it; he therefore that does the thing, does actuate the intention of God, and sanctifies his own: but this is to be understood with the addition of the following caution.

19. (4.) He may be confident that his intentions for God's glory and the good of souls are right and principal, who so conjoins his other lesser ends with the conduct of the greater, that they shall always be made to give place to the greater. That is, who still pursues the interest of souls, and the work of his ministry, when the hopes of maintenance, or honour, or secular regards, do fail. For he that for carnal or secular regards will either quit or neglect his ministry, it is certain, his carnal or secular ends were his chief motive and incentive in the work. It was the case of Demas, who was St. Paul's minister and work-fellow in the service of the Gospel, but he left him, because "he loved the present world"; concerning which, it is to be considered, that this lapse and recession of Demas from the assistance of St. Paul, did not proceed from that love of the world which St. John speaks of, and is criminal, and forbidden to all Christians, which "whosoever hath, the love of the Father dwells not in him," but is so to be understood of such a love, which to other Christians is not unlawful, but was, in those times especially, inconsistent with the duty of evangelists, in those great necessities of the church: Demas was a good man, but weak in his spirit, and too secular in his relations, but he returned to his station, and did the work of an evangelist,

awhile after, as appears in the Epistle to the Colossians and Philemon; but for the present he was to blame. For he would secure his relations and his interests with too great a caution and diligence, and leave the other, to attend this. Such as now-a-days is too great care of our estates, secular negotiations, merchandises, civil employments, not ministering directly unto religion, and the advantages of its ministration. For our great king the Lord Jesus, hath given to all Christians some employment, but to some more, to some less, and in their own proportion they must give a return: and in a minister of the Gospel, every inordination of carefulness, and every excess of attendance to secular affairs, and every unnecessary avocation from, or neglect of, his great work is criminal: and many things are excesses in them, which are not in others, because the ministerial office requires more attendance and conversation with spiritual things, than that of others.

20. (5.) If ever the minister of holy things, for hope or fear, for gain or interest, desert his station, when he is persecuted, or when he is not persecuted,—it is too much to be presumed, that he did not begin for God, who, for man, will quit God's service. They that wander till they find a rich seat, do all that they do for the riches of the place, not for the employment: “*Si non ubi sedeas, locus est, est ubi ambules,*” said he in the comedy; the calling of these men is not fixed but ambulatory: and if that which fixes them, be temporal advantages, then that which moved them principally, is not spiritual employment.

21. For it is considerable, that if it be unlawful to undertake the holy calling, without a divine vocation to it, then to forsake it without a divine permission must be criminal. He that calls to come, calls to continue, where the need is lasting, and the office perpetual. But to leave the calling when the revenue is gone, to quit the altar when it hath no offering, to let the souls wander when they bring no gifts,—is to despise the religion, and to love only the fat of the sacrifices: for the altar indeed does sanctify the gift, but not the gift the altar; and he hath but a light opinion of an eternal crown of glory, or thinks God but an ill paymaster, that will not do him service upon the stock of his promises, and will not feed the flock, though we have no other reward

but to be feasted in the eternal supper of the lamb. Who are hirelings, but they who fly when the wolf comes? And woe be to that evangelist, who upon any secular regard neglects to preach the Gospel; woe be to him, to whom it shall be said at the day of judgment, ‘I was hungry, and my flock was hungry, and ye fed neither it nor me.’

But this is to be understood with these liberties;

22. (1.) That it be no prejudice to these ecclesiastics, who in time of persecution, do so attend to their ministries, that no material part of it be omitted, or slightly performed, and yet take from it such portions of time as are necessary for their labour or support, by any just and honest employment. Thus St. Paul wrought in the trade of a tent-maker, because he would not be a burden to the church of Corinth; and when the church is stripped naked of her robes, and the bread of proposition is stolen from her table by soldiers, there is no peradventure but the ecclesiastical offices are so to be attended to, that the natural duty and necessity be not neglected.

23. (2.) That it be no prejudice to ecclesiastics in the days of peace or war, to change their station from bishop to bishoprick, from church to church, where God or the church, where charity or necessity, where prudence or obedience, calls. Indeed it hath been fiercely taught, that ecclesiastics ought never, and upon no pretence, to desert their church, and go to another, any more than a man may forsake his wife; and for this a decretal of Pope Evaristus is pretended, and is recorded in the canon law. “Sicut vir non debet adulterare uxorem suam, ita nec episcopus ecclesiam suam, ut illam dimittat ad quam fuit sacratus^q:” and therefore when Eusebius the bishop of Cæsarea was called to be bishop of Antioch, he refused it pertinaciously, and for it was highly commended by the Emperor; and St. Jerome in his epistle to Oceanus tells, “In Nicenâ synodo à patribus decretum est, ne de alia in aliam ecclesiam episcopus transferatur, ne, virginalis pauperculæ societate contempta, ditioris adulteræ quærat amplexus.” Something indeed like it was decreed by the fifteenth and sixteenth canons of the Nicene council; and it was a usual punishment amongst the holy primitives, “ccaret cathedra propria, qui ambit alienam.”

^q Cap. Sicut Vir. can. 7. q. 1.

But these things, though they be true and right, yet are not contradictory to the present case. For,

24. (1.) Evaristus, it is clear, forbade translations and removes from church to church, “ambitus causa,” for ambition or covetousness, and therefore it is by him expressly permitted in their proper cases and limits; that is, “in inevitabili necessitate, aut apostolica, vel regulari mutatione,” ‘when there is inevitable necessity,’ or the command and authority of a superior power: and yet upon perusal of the decree I find, that Evaristus’s intent was, that a bishop should not thrust his church from him by way of divorce and excommunication, and take another: as appears not only by the corresponding part of the decree, viz., “that neither must the church take in another bishop or husband upon him to whom already she is espoused;” but by the expression used in the beginning of it, “Dimittere ecclesiam episcopus non debet;” and it is compared to the adultery of a man that puts away his wife, and marries another; and also it appears more yet by the gloss, which seems to render the same sense of it, and wholly discourses of the unlawfulness to excommunicate a church or a city, lest the innocent should suffer with the criminal; for when a church is excommunicated, though all those persons die upon whom the sentence fell, yet the church is the same under other persons their successors; and therefore all the way it does injustice, by involving the new-arising innocents, and at last is wholly unjust by including all and only innocent persons. But which way soever this decree be understood, it comes not home to a prohibition of our case.

25. (2.) As for Eusebius, it is a clear case he imposed upon the good Emperor, who knew not the secret cause of Eusebius’s denial to remove from Cæsarea to Antioch. For he having engaged the Emperor beforetime to write in his behalf, that he might be permitted to enjoy that bishoprick, was not willing to seem guilty of levity and easiness of change. . But that was not all, he was a secret favourer of the Arians, and therefore was unwilling to go to that church, where his predecessor Eustathius had been famous for opposing that pest.

(3.) To that of St. Jerome out of the Nicene council, I answer, That the prohibition is only of such, as without

authority, upon their own head, for their own evil purposes, and with injury to their own churches, did it; and of covetousness it is, that St. Jerome notes and reprobates the practice: to despise our charge because it is poor, is to love the money more than the souls, and therefore this is not to be done by any one of his own choice; but if it be done by the command or election of our superior, it is to be presumed it is for the advantage of the church in matter of direct reason, or collateral assistances, and therefore hath in it no cause of reproof.

26. And to this purpose the whole affair is very excellently stated by the fourteenth canon of the apostles; “A bishop must not leave his own parish or diocess, and invade that of another man, ‘ nisi forte quis cum rationabili causa compellatur, tanquam qui possit ibidem constitutus plus lucri conferre, et in causa religionis aliquid profectus propicere.’ ” If there be a reasonable cause, he may; and the cause is reasonable, if by going he may do more good or advantage to religion: but of this he is not to be judge himself, but must be judged by his superiors; “ et hoc non à semetipso pertentet, sed multorum episcoporum judicio, et maxima supplicatione perficiat; ” “ he must not do it on his own head, but by the sentence and desire of the bishops.”

27. There needs no more to be added to this, but that if a greater revenue be annexed to another charge, and that it be ‘ in rem ecclesiæ,’ that the more worthy person should be advanced thither, to enable his better ministries by those secular assistances, which our infirmity needs, there is nothing to be said against it, but that if he be the man he is taken for, he knows how to use those advantages to God’s glory, and the good of souls, and the services of the church; and if he does so, his intentions are to be presumed pure and holy, because the good of souls is the principal.

28. Upon the supposition of these causes, we find that the practice of the ancient bishops and clerks in their translations was approved. Origen did first serve God in the church of Alexandria, afterward he went to Cæsarea, to Antioch, to Tyre: and St. Gregory Nazianzen changed his episcopal see eight times. Nay, the apostles themselves did so: St. Peter was first bishop of Antioch, afterward of Rome: and the necessity and utility of the churches called St. Paul

to an ambulatory government and episcopacy, though at last he also was fixed at Rome, and he removed Timothy and Titus from church to church, as the need and uses of the church required. But in this, our call must be from God, or from our superiors, not from levity or pride, covetousness or negligence. Concerning which, who please further to be satisfied, may read St. Athanasius's epistle to Dracontius, of old; and of late, Chytræus 'in epistolis p. 150 et 678.' and Conradus Porta in his 'Formalia.' This only; If every man were indispensably tied to abide where he is first called to minister, then it were not lawful for an inferior minister to desire the good work of a bishop; which because it is not to be administered in the same place or charge, according to the universal discipline of the church for very many ages, must suppose that there can be a reasonable cause to change our charges, because the Apostle commands that desire which supposes that change.

29. These being the limits and measures of the rule, it would be very good if we were able to discern concerning the secrets of our intentions, and the causes of actions. It is true, that because men confound their actions and deliberations, it will be impossible to tell, in many cases, what motive is the principal ingredient. "Sed ut tunc communibus magis commodis, quam private jactantiae studebamus, cum intentionem adfectumque muneris nostri vellemus intelligi; ita nunc in ratione edendi veremur, ne forte non aliorum utilitatibus, sed propriæ laudi servisse videamur." It is hard for a wise and a gallant man, who does public actions of greatest worthiness deserving honour, to tell certainly whether he is more pleased in the honours that men do him, or in the knowledge that he hath done them benefits. But yet in very many cases, we may at least guess probably which is the prevailing ingredient, by these following measures; besides those which I have noted^{*} and applied to the special case of undertaking the calling ecclesiastical.

Signs of Difference, whereby we may in a mixed and complicated Intention, discern which is the principal Ingredient.

30. (1.) Whatsoever came in after the determination was made, though it add much the greater confidence, and

^{*} Gierig, vol. 1. p. 35.

^s Vide Rule of Holy Living, chap. 1. sect. 2.

makes the resolution sharper and more active, yet it is not to be reckoned as the prevailing ingredient; for though it add degrees, yet the whole determination was perfected before. The widow Fulvia was oppressed by Attilius; she complains to Secundus the lawyer. He considers whether he should be advocate for his friend Attilius, or for the oppressed Fulvia; and at last determines on the side of piety and charity, and resolves to relieve the widow, but with some abatement of his spirit and confidence, because it is against his friend; but charity prevails. As he goes to court he meets with Caninius, who gloriously commends the advocacy,—and by superadding that spur made his diffidence and imperfect resolution confident and clear. In this case the whole action is to be attributed to piety, not to the love of fame; for this only added some moments, but that made the determination.

31. (2.) When the determination is almost made, and wants some weight to finish it, whatsoever then supervenes and casts the scales, is not to be accounted the prevailing ingredient, but that which made most in the suspension and time of deliberation, and brought it forward. It is like buying and selling: not the last maravedi that was stood upon, was the greatest argument of parting with the goods; but that farthing added to the bigger sum, made it big enough: and a child's finger may thrust a load forward, which being haled by mighty men stands still for want of a little assistance.

32. (3.) That is the prevailing ingredient in the determination which is most valued, not which most pleases; that which is rationally preferred, not that which delights the senses. If the man had rather lose the sensual than the intellectual good, though in that his fancy is more delighted, yet this is the stronger and greater in the divine acceptance, though possibly in nature it be less active, because less pleasing to those faculties, which whether we will or no, will be very much concerned in all the intercourses of this life. He—that keeps a festival in gratitude and spiritual joy to do God glory, and to give him thanks, and in the preparation to the action is hugely pleased by considering the music, the company, the festivity and innocent refreshments, and in his fancy, leaps at this, but his resolution walks on by that,—hath

not spoiled the regularity of his conscience by the intertexture of the sensual with the spiritual, so long as it remains innocent. For though this flames brightest, yet the other burns hottest, and will last longer than the other. But of this there is no other sign, but that first we be infinitely careful to prescribe measures and limits to the secular joy, that it may be perfectly subordinate to, and complying with, the spiritual and religious: and secondly, if we are willing to suppress the light flame, rather than extinguish the solid fire.

33. (4.) Then the holy and pious ingredient is over-powered by the mixture of the secular, when an instrument towards the end is chosen more proportionable to this, than to that. Cæcilius, to do a real not a fantastic benefit to his tenants, erected a library in his villa, and promised a yearly revenue for their children's education, and nobler institution: and thus far judgment ought to be made, that he intended piety rather than fame; for to his fame, plays and spectacles would (as the Roman humour then was) have served better; but when in the acting his resolution he praised that his pious purpose, and told them he did it for a pious, not a vain-glorious end, however the intention might be right, this publication was not right: but, when he appointed that anniversary orations should be made in the praise of his pious foundation, he a little too openly discovered what was the bigger wheel in that motion. For he that serves a secret piety by a public panegyric, disorders the piety by dismantling the secret: it may still be piety, but it will be lessened by the publication; though this publication be no otherwise criminal, than because it is vain. “ *Meminimus, quanto majore animo honestatis fructus in conscientia, quam in fama, reponatur. Sequi enim gloria, non appeti, debet: nec si casu aliquo non sequatur, idcirco quod gloriam meruit, minus pulchrum est.* ” Ii vero, qui benefacta sua verbis adornant, non ideo prædicare, quia fecerint, sed ut prædarent, fecisse creduntur^u;” which is the very thing which I affirm in this particular. If the intermediate or consequent actions, serve the collateral or secular end, most visibly it is to be supposed, that this was the greater motive, and had too great an influence into the deliberation.

^u Plin. lib. 1. ep. 8. Gierig, vol. 1. pag. 35.

But because the heart of man is so intricate, trifling, and various, in most cases it must be sufficient for us to know, that if the mixture be innocent, the whole deliberation is secured in the kind of it, and for degrees we must do as well, as we can.

35. But, on the other side, if the secular end mixed with the spiritual and religious, the just and the honest, be unlawful, and yet intended, though in a less degree, though but accidentally and by an after-consent; the conscience is neither sure nor right, but is dishonoured and defiled; for the whole deliberation is made criminal by mingling with forbidden purposes. He that takes up arms under his prince in a just war, and at the same time intends revenge against his private enemy, casually engaged on the adverse party, loses the reward of his obedience, and changes it for the devilish pleasures of revenge.

Concerning the measure and conduct of our intentions, there are some other things to be said, but because they are extrinsical to the chief purpose of this rule, they are properly to be considered under their own head.

RULE VI.

An Argument not sufficient nor competent, though it do persuade us to a Thing in itself good, is not the Ground of a Right, nor a sufficient Warrant for a sure Conscience.

1. HE that goes to public prayers because it is the custom, or communicates at Easter to avoid a censure, hath done an act in itself good, but his motive was neither competent nor sufficient to make the action religious, or to manifest and declare the conscience to be sure and right. For conscience is the repository of practical reasons: and as in civil actions, we count him a fool who wears clothes only because they cost him nothing, or walks because he would see his shadow move upon the wall: so it is in moral. When the reason is incompetent, the action is by chance, neither prudent nor chosen, alterable by a triflē, tending to a cheap end, proceeding by a regardless motion: and conscience might as well

be seated in the fancy, or in the foot, as in the understanding, if its nature and proper design were not to be conducted with reasons proportionable to such actions, which tend to an end perfective of man, and productive of felicity.

2. This rule is so to be understood, that it be not required of all men to have reasons equally good for the same determinations, but sufficient and reasonable in themselves, and apt to lead them in their proper capacities and dispositions, that is, reasons proportionable to that kind of things in which the determination is instanced, viz., a religious reason for an action of religion; a prudent reason for a civil action: but if it be in its proper kind, it is sufficient if it be probable, provided always, that it makes a sure mind, and a full persuasion.

3. He that believes Christian religion, because the men are charitable and chaste, and so taught to be, and commanded by the religion, is brought into a good place by a single taper; but he came in by no false light, and he is there where he ought to be. He did not see the way in so brightly as St. Paul did, who was conducted in by an angel from heaven, with a bright flame in his hand; but he made shift to see his way in: and because the light that guided him, came from heaven, his conscience was rightly instructed, and if it persuaded him heartily, his conscience is as sure as it is right.

4. Quest. Upon the account and consequence of this rule it is proper to inquire, Whether it be lawful and ingenuous, to go about to persuade a man to the belief of a true proposition, by arguments with which himself is not persuaded, and which he believes are not sufficient? The case is this:

5. Girolami, a learned priest of Ferrara, finds that many of his parishioners are infected with Judaism, by reason of their conversation with the Jewish merchants. He studies the Jewish books to discover the weakness of their arguments, and to convince them upon their own grounds. But finding his parishioners moved only by popular arguments, and not capable of understanding the secrets of the old prophets, the synchronisms, nor the computation of Daniel's weeks, the infinite heaps of reasons by which Christianity stands firm in defiance of all pretensions to the contrary; sees it necessary to persuade them by things as easy as those

are by which they were abused. But then he considers ; if they were by error led into error, it is not fit that by error also they should be led out of it into truth, for God needs not to be served with a lie, and evil must not be done that good may be thence procured. But if I go by a false argument to cozen them into truth, I tell a lie to recover them from a lie, and it is a disparagement to the cause of God, that it must be supported by the devil. But having discoursed thus far, he considers further : every argument which I am able to answer, I know cannot conclude in the question ; for if it be to be answered, it is at most but a specious outside of reason ; and he that knows this, or believes it so, either must not use that instrument of persuasion, or, if he does, he must resolve to abuse the man's understanding before he can set it right : and this he believes to be against the honour of truth, and the rules of charity, and the simplicity and ingenuity of the spirit of a Christian.

To this Question I answer by several Propositions.

6. (1.) It is not lawful to tell a lie for God and for truth ; because God will not be served by that which he hates, and there are no defects in truth which need such violent remedies. Therefore Girolami might not, to persuade his Judaizing parishioners, tell them a tale of a vision, or pretend a tradition which is not, or falsify a record ; because these are direct arts of the devil, this is a doing evil for a good end : and every single lie is equally hated by God, and where there is a difference, it is made by complication, or the mixing of something else with a lie : and because God hath created and communicated to mankind, not only sufficient but abundant justifications of whatsoever he hath commanded us to believe, therefore he hates infinitely to have his glorious economy of faith and truth to be disordered and discomposed by the productions of hell. For every lie is of the devil.

7. (2.) It is lawful to use an argument ‘cui potest subesse falsum,’ such which I know is not certain, but yet I actually believe it to be true. That is, though the argument be not demonstrative, but probable only, yet I may safely use it, if I believe myself to be on the right side of the probability : for a real truth and a supposed truth are all one as to

the innocence of my purposes. And he that knows how little certainty there is in human discourses, and how “ we know in part, and prophesy in part,” and that of every thing whereof we know a little, we are ignorant in much more, must either be content with such proportions as the things will bear, or as himself can get, or else he must never seek to alter or to persuade any man to be of his opinion. For the greatest part of discourses that is in the whole world, is nothing but a heap of probable inducements, plausibilities, and witty entertainments : and the throng of notices is not unlike the accidents of a battle, in which every man tells a new tale, something that he saw, mingled with a great many things which he saw not: his eyes and his fear joining together equally in the instruction and the illusion, these make up the stories. And in the observation of things, there is infinitely more variety than in faces, and in the contingencies of the world. Let ten thousand men read the same books, and they shall all make several uses, draw several notes, and understand them to several effects and purposes. Knowledge is infinite, and out of this infinity every one snatches some things real, and some images of things ; and there are so many cognoscitive faculties above and below, and powers ministering to knowledge, and all these have so many ways of being abused, or hindered, and of being imperfect ; and the degrees of imperfection, positive, and privative, and negative, are also themselves absolutely so infinite, that to arrive at probabilities in most things is no small progression. But we must be content to make use of that, both for ourselves and others.

8. Upon this account we may quote scriptures to those senses which they can well serve in a question, and in which they are used by learned men, though we suppose the principal intention be of a different thing, so it be not contrary. For all learned men know, that in Scripture many sayings are full of potential significations, besides what are on the face of the words, or in the heart of the design : and therefore although we may not allege scriptures in a sense contrary to what we believe it meant ; yet to any thing beside its first meaning, we may, if the analogy will bear it ; and if by learned men it be so used, that is in effect, because for aught we know it may be so indeed.

9. (3.) If a man suppose his arguments sufficient and competent to persuade, though they be neither fitting to persuade, nor at all sufficient, he may yet lawfully use them. For in this case though himself be deceived, yet because it is upon the strength of those arguments he relies, he can be tied to use no better than he hath: and since his conscience is heartily persuaded, though it be in error, yet that which follows that persuasion is innocent (if it be not mingled with design), though, it may be, that which went before was not so.

10. (4.) In the persuasion of a truth, it is lawful to use such arguments whose strength is wholly made prevailing by the weakness of him that is to be persuaded. Such as are arguments ‘ad hominem,’ that is, proportionable to the doctrines, customs, usages, belief, and credulity, of the man. The reasons are these :

1. Because ignorant persons are not capable of such arguments as may demonstrate the question; and he that goes about to draw a child to him, may pull him by the long sleeve of his coat, and need not to hire a yoke of oxen.

2. That which will demonstrate a truth to one person, possibly will never move another. Because our reason does not consist in a mathematical point: and the heart of reason, that vital and most sensible part, in which only it can be conquered fairly, is an ambulatory essence, and not fixed; it wanders up and down like a floating island, or like that which we call the life-blood; and it is not often very easy to hit that white, by which only our reason is brought to perfect assent: and this needs no other proof but our daily experience, and common notices of things. That which at one time is not regarded, at another time is a prevailing motive; and I have observed that a discourse at one time hath been lightly regarded, or been only pleasing to the ear, which, a year or two after, hath made great impressions of piety upon the spirit of the hearers. And therefore, that I can answer the argument, it is not enough to make me think it necessary to lay it aside or to despise it; there may be something in him that hears me, that can make the argument to become perfect and effectual; and the want of that, it may be, in me, makes me apt to slight it. And besides that some pretended answers are illusions rather than solutions, it may be, that beyond my answer, a wiser man may make a reply,

and confirm the argument so as I know not: and therefore if it be truth you persuade, it were altogether as good, and I am sure much more easy, to let the man you persuade, enter at the first and broadest gate of the true proposition, than after having passed through a great many turnings and labyrinths, at last come but to the same place where he might first have entered. There are some witty men that can answer any thing; but suppose they could not, yet it would be impossible that men should be tied in all cases to speak nothing but demonstrations.

3. Some men are to be wrought upon not by direct argument, but by artifices and back-blows; they are easy enough to believe the truth, if they could; and therefore you must, to persuade them, remove their prejudices and prépossessions; and to this purpose, it will not be necessary to bring those things which are proper to the question, but things accidental and extrinsical. They who were prejudiced at our blessed Saviour because he was of Galilee, needed no other argument to make them to believe in him, but to confute that foolish proverb, "Out of Galilee comes no good:" and yet he that from thence thinks the question of his being the Messias sufficiently concluded, is very far from understanding the effect and powers of argument.

4. The hinderances of belief are seated in several faculties, in our fancy, in our will, in our appetite: now in these cases there is no way to persuade, but by arguing so as to prevail with that faculty. If any man should say that our blessed Saviour is not yet come in the flesh, upon a foolish fancy that he believes not, that God would honour such a wicked nation with so great a glory, as that the Saviour of the world should be born of them; he needs no argument to persuade him to be a Christian, but by having it proved to him, that it was not only likely, but really so, and necessary it should be so, not only for the verification of the prophecies of him, but for divers congruities in the nature and circumstances of things. Here the argument is to confute the fancy only, not the reason.

5. Sometimes the judgment is right, but the affections are perverse; and then, not demonstrations, but popular arguments are not only lawful, but useful, and sufficient. For reasons of abstracted speculation move not the lower man.

Make the people in love with your proposition, and cause them to hate the contrary, and you have done all that they are capable of. When some divines in Germany were forced for their own defence to gain the people to their party, they disputed against the absolute decree of reprobation, by telling them that their adversaries' doctrine did teach that God did drag the pretty children from their mothers' breasts, and throw many of them into the eternal portion of devils: this moved the women, who follow reason as far as they can be made in love with it, and their understanding is oftentimes more in their heart than in their head. And there are thousands of people, men and women, who believe upon no other account than this, neither can they be taught otherwise. When St. Paul would persuade the Jews to reason, and from laying violent hands upon him; he was not to attempt it by offering undeniably to prove that he did well by going to the Gentiles, since God had rejected the Jews, excepting a remnant only: but he persuaded them by telling them he did nothing against the law of Moses and the temple.

6. There are some fondnesses, and strange adherences to trifles in most people, humours of the nation, love of the advantage of their families, relations to sects or dignities, natural sympathies and antipathies, in a correspondency to which, all those arguments which are dressed, are like to prevail, and cannot otherwise do it. For when a man's understanding is mingled with interest, his arguments must have something of this, or else they will never stir that: and therefore all our arguments cannot be freed from such allays.

7. In all the discourses of men, not only orators, but philosophers, and even in their severest discourses, all the good and all the wise men of the world heap together many arguments, who yet cannot suppose them all certain; but yet they therefore innocently use them, because, as there are several capacities of men to be dealt withal, so there are several notices of things; and that may be highly concluding, which, it may be, is not well represented, and therefore not fancied or observed by him that uses it; and to another it becomes effective because he does.

8. The Holy Spirit of God himself in his intercourses with men is pleased to descend to our capacities, and to use arguments taken from our own principles, and which prevail

more by silencing us, rather than demonstrating the thing. Thus St. Paul in his arguments for the resurrection uses this; “ If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” There are some, even too many now-a-days, and many more then, who would have granted both the antecedent and the consequent; but because the Corinthians disavowed the consequent, they were forced to admit the antecedent. And at last, thousands of persons could never be drawn from their error, if we might not make use of arguments, weak like their capacities, and more proportionable to their understanding than to the question.

There are two cautions to be added to make the rule perfect:

1. That if the disciple relying upon his master’s authority more than his own ability to judge, ask the doctor, whether upon his knowledge and faith that argument does evict the question; if the doctor himself does not believe it, he must then put no more force upon it by his affirmation and authority, than he thinks it does in nature bear; but must give prudent accounts of the whole question in compliance to the present necessity of the demander.

Of the same consideration it is, when a question being disputed between two parties, the standers-by expect the truest and most proper account of things. In this case, all openness and ingenuity is to be used according to our own sense of things, not according to what may comply with any man’s weakness; and the not doing so is want of ingenuity, and the worthiness of Christian charity, and a perfect deceiving them who expect and desire such things as ought to be finally relied upon.

2. In all arguments which are to prevail by the weakness or advantages taken from the man, he that goes about to persuade, must not say any thing that he knows to be false; but he must comply and twist about the man’s weakness, so as to be innocent all the way. Let him take him that is weak and wrap him in swaddling-clothes, but not encompass him with snakes: but yet this hath one loose and permission that may be used.

11. (3.) It is lawful for a man, in persuading another to a truth, to make use of a false proposition, which he that is to

* 1 Cor. xv. 14.

be persuaded, already doth believe: that is, a man may justly dispute upon the supposition, not upon the concession and granting of an error. Thus St. Paul disputed with the Corinthians, and to induce them into a belief of the resurrection, made use of a foolish custom among them in use, of being baptized for the dead. For the Christian church hath but two sacraments, baptism, and the Lord's supper; at the beginning some of the Christians used baptism, and in succeeding ages, they used to celebrate the Lord's supper for the dead, and do to this day in the church of Rome. Upon this fond custom of theirs, St. Paul thus argues: 'If there be no resurrection, then it is to no purpose that you are baptized for the dead; but that is to purpose (as you suppose), therefore there is a resurrection.' Thus prayer for the dead, and invocation of saints, according to the principles taught in the primitive church, might have been made use of against each other. If all men are imperfect till the day of judgment, and till then enter not into heaven, then you cannot with confidence make prayers for them, who, for aught you know, need your help more: but if all that die well, that is, if all that die in the Lord, do instantly enjoy the beatifical vision, and so are in a condition to be prayed to, then they need not be prayed for. As for the middle place, they in those ages knew no such thing, as men have since dreamed of. As God in such cases makes use of a prepared wickedness, though he infers none, much less does he make any to be necessary and unavoidable; so may good men and wise make use of a prepared error, a falsehood already believed; but they must neither teach nor betray any one into it.

The objections mentioned in the state of this question, are already answered in the stating the propositions.

But now arises another question, and the solution will follow upon the same grounds.

12. *Quest.* Whether it be lawful, for a good end, for preachers to affright men with panic terrors, and to create fears that have no ground; as to tell them, if they be liars, their faces will be deformed; if they be perjured, the devil will haunt them in visible shapes; if they be sacrilegious, they shall have the leprosy; or any thing whereby weak and ignorant people can be most wrought upon?

I answer briefly:

13. There are terrors enough in the New Testament to affright any man from his sins, who can be wrought upon by fear: and if all that Moses and the prophets say, and all that Christ and his apostles published, be not sufficient, then nothing can be. For I am sure nothing can be a greater or more formidable evil than hell; and no terrors can bring greater affrightment, than those which are the proper portion of the damned. But the measures of the permission and liberty that can be used, are these:

14. (1.) A preacher or governor may affright those that are under him, and deter them from sin, by threatening them with any thing which probably may happen. So he may denounce a curse upon the estate of sacrilegious persons, robbers of churches, oppressors of priests, and widows and orphans; and particularly, whatsoever the widow or orphan in the bitterness of their souls do pray, may happen upon such evil persons; or what the church in the instruments of donation have expressed: as, to die childless; to be afflicted with the gout; to have an ambulatory life, the fortune of a penny, since for that he forsakes God and his religion; a distracted mind or fancy, or any thing of this nature. For since the curses of this life and of the other are indefinitely threatened to all sinners, and some particularly to certain sins, as want is to the detainers of tithes, a wandering fortune to church-robbers^y; it is not unreasonable, and therefore it is lawful to make use of such particulars, as are most likely to be effective upon the consciences of sinners.

15. (2.) It is lawful to affright men with the threatening of any thing, that is possible to happen in the ordinary effects of Providence. For every sin is against an infinite God, and his anger is sometimes the greatest, and can produce what evil he please; and he uses to arm all his creatures against sinners, and sometimes strikes a stroke with his own hand, and creates a prodigy of example to perpetuate a fear upon men to all ages.

But this is to be admitted with these cautions;

1. It must be done so as to be limited within those ways, which need not suppose a miracle to have them effected. Thus to threaten a sinner in England, that if he profanes the holy sacrament, a tiger shall meet him in the church-

^y Malachi, iii. 8, &c. Psal. lxxxiii. 18.

yard and tear him, is so improbable and unreasonable, that it is therefore not to be done, lest the authority, and the counsel, and the threatening, become ridiculous: but we have warrant to threaten him with diseases, and sharp sicknesses, and temporal death; and the warrant is derived from a precedent in Scripture, God's dealing with the Corinthian communicants^z.

2. He who thus intends to dissuade, must in prudence be careful that he be not too decretry and determinate in the particular; but either wholly instance in general threatenings, or with exceptive and cautious terms in the particular; as, 'Take heed lest such an evil happen.' or, 'It is likely it may,' and 'We have no security for a minute against it,' and 'So God hath done to others.'

3. Let these be only threatenings, not prophecies, lest the whole dispensation become contemptible; and therefore let all such threatenings be understood with a proviso, that if such things do not happen, the man hath not escaped God's anger, but is reserved for worse. God walketh upon the face of the waters, and his footsteps are not seen; but however, evil is the portion of the sinner.

16. (3.) In all those threatenings which are according to the analogy of the Gospel, or the state of things and persons with which we have intercourse, we may take all that liberty that can by apt instruments concur to the work of God: dressing them with circumstances of terror and affrightment, and representing spiritual events by metaphors, analogues, and instances of nature. Thus our blessed Lord, expressing the torments of hell, signifies the greatness of them by such things which in nature are most terrible; as "brimstone and fire, the worm of conscience, weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." But this, I say, must ever be kept within the limits of analogy to what is revealed, and must not make excursions to extraregular and ridiculous significations. Such as is the fancy of some divines in the Roman church, and particularly of Cornelius à Lapide^a, that the souls of the damned shall be rolled up in bundles like a heap and involved circles of snakes, and in hell shall sink down like a stone into the bottomless pit, falling still downward for ever and ever. This is not well; but let the expres-

^z 1 Cor. xi. 30.

^a In Apocal.

sions be according to the proportions of what is revealed. The divines in several ages have taken great liberty in this affair, which I know no reason to reprove, if some of their tragical expressions did not, or were not apt to, pass into dogmatical affirmatives and opinions of reality in such inventions.

17. (4.) If any extraregular example hath ever happened, that may be made use of to affright men from the same or the like sins, and so pass into a regular warning. Thus, though it but once happened, that God punished rebellion by causing the earth to open and swallow up the rebels against their prince and priest, Moses and Aaron, that is, it is but once recorded in Holy Scripture; yet God hath the same power now, and the same anger against rebellion; and as he can, so we are not sure that he will not, oftentimes do the same. Whatsoever hath happened and can happen, we ought to fear lest in the like cases it should happen. And therefore this is a proper instrument of a just fear, and apt rightly to minister to a sure and a right conscience.

18. (5.) If any prodigy of accident and judgment hath happened, though it be possible it may be done for the manifestation of the divine glory, yet because it is ten thousand to one, but it is because of sin too; this may be made use of to affright sinners, although there be no indication for what sin that judgment happened. Thus the ruin of the Greek monarchy finished upon the day of Pentecost: the fearful and prodigious swallowing up the cities of the Colossians and Laodiceans; the burning towns and villages by eruption of fire from mountains; the sudden cataracts of water breaking from the Indian hills; the sudden death and madness of many people; the horrible ruin and desolation of families and kingdoms, may be indifferently used and propounded to all sorts of persons, where there is need of such violent courses: and provided that they be charitably and prudently applied, may effect fear and caution in some sinners, who otherwise would be too ready for gaieties and unsafe liberties.

19. (6.) To children and fools, and all those whose understanding is but a little better, it hath been in all ages practised, that they be affrighted with mormoes and bug-bears, that they may be cozened into good. But this is

therefore permitted, because other things which are real, certain, or probable, cannot be understood or perceived by them: and therefore these things are not to be permitted, where it can well be otherwise. If it cannot, it is fit that their understandings should be conducted thither where they ought to go, and by such instruments as can be useful.

RULE VII.

A Conscience determined by the Counsel of wise Men, even against its own Inclinations, may be sure and right.

FOR in many cases the counsel of wise men is the best argument; and if the conscience was first inclined by a weaker, every change to a better is a degree of certainty. In this case, to persist in the first inclination of conscience, is obstinacy, not constancy: but on the other side, to change our first persuasion when it is well built, for the counsel of men of another persuasion, though wiser than ourselves, is levity, not humility. This rule is practicable only in such cases where the conscience observes the weakness of its first inducement, or justly suspects it, and hath not reason so much to suspect the sentence of wiser men. How it is further to be reduced to practice, is more properly to be considered in the third chapter, and thither I refer it.

RULE VIII.

He that sins against a right and sure Conscience, whatever the Instance be, commits a great Sin, but not a double one.

1. His sin is indeed the greater, because it is less excusable and more bold. For the more light there is in a regular understanding, the more malice there is in an irregular will. “If I had not come to them (said Christ^b), they had not had sin; but now have they no cover for their sin:” that is, because they are sufficiently taught their duty. It is not an aggravation of sin, barely to say, ‘It was done against our

^b John, xv. 22.

conscience :’ for all sins are so, either directly or indirectly, mediately or immediately, in the principle or in the emanation. But thus ; the more sure and confident the conscience is, the sin receives the greater degree. It is an aggravation of it, that it was done against a clear light, and a full understanding, and a perfect, contrary, determination.

2. But even then it does not make it to be a distinct sin. “ Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin,” said the Apostle ; but he did not say it was two. It is a transcendent passing upon every sinful action, that it is against a known law, and a contrary reason and persuasion ; but if this could make the act to be doubly irregular,—by the same reason, every substance must be two, viz., by having a being, and a substantial being. And the proper reason of this is, because the conscience obliges and ties us by the band of the commandment, the same individual band, and no other. The conscience is therefore against the act, because the commandment is against it ; the conscience being God’s remembrancer, the record, and the register of the law. A thief does not sin against the law and the judge severally ; neither does the magistrate punish him one way, and the law another. The conscience hath no law of its own, but the law of God is the rule of it. Therefore, where there is but one obligation to the duty, there can be but one deformity in the prevarication. But,

3. In sins where there is a double formality, there, indeed, in one action there may be two sins, because there is a double law : as he that kills his father, sins twice, he is impious and unjust ; he breaks the laws of piety and justice ; he sins against the fifth and the sixth commandments at once ; he is a murderer, and he is ungrateful, and he is impious. But in sins of a single nature, there is but a single relation. For the conscience and the law, is the rule and the parchment ; and he that sins against the one, therefore also sins against the other, because they both terminate but one relation.

4. But although he does not commit two sins, yet he commits one great one,—there being nothing that can render an action culpable or imputable in the measures of justice, but its being a deviation from, or a contradiction to, the rule. It is against my conscience, that is, against my illuminated and instructed reason, therefore it is a sin : this is a demonstration, because it is against God, and against myself;

against my reason, and his illumination ; that is, against all bands, divine and human.

5. Quest. But then what shall a judge do, who knows the witnesses in a criminal cause to have sworn falsely ? The case is this : Conopus, a Spartan judge, walking abroad near the gardens of Onesicritus, espies him killing of his slave Asotus ; who, to palliate the fact, himself accuses another of his servants, Orgilus, and compelled some to swear it as he affirmed. The process was made, advocates entertained by Onesicritus, and the poor Orgilus convict by testimony and legal proof. Conopus, the judge, knows the whole process to be injurious, but knows not what to do, because he remembers that he is bound to judge according to allegation and proof, and yet to do justice and judgment, which, in this case, is impossible. He therefore inquires for an expedient, or a peremptory resolution on either hand : since he offends against the laws of Sparta, the order of law, and his own life, if he acquits one who is legally convicted ; and yet, if he condemns him whom he knows to be innocent, he sins against God and nature, and against his own conscience.

6. That a judge not only may, but is obliged to, proceed according to the process of law, and not to his own private conscience, is confidently affirmed by Aquinas, by his master, and by his scholars, and, of late, defended earnestly by Didacus Covaruvias, a learned man indeed and a great lawyer ; and they do it upon this account :

7. (1.) For there is a double person or capacity in a judge ; he is a private person, and hath special obligations and duties incumbent upon him in that capacity : and his conscience hath a proper information, and gives him laws, and hath no superior but God : and as he is such a one, he must proceed upon the notices and persuasions of his conscience, guided by its own measures. But as he is a judge, he is to do the office of a judge, and to receive information by witnesses and solemnities of law, and is not to bring his own private conscience to become the public measure. Not Attilius Regulus, but the consul, must give sentence : and since he is bound to receive his information from witnesses, as they prove, so the law presumes ; whose minister because he is, if there be any fault, it is in the law, not in the judge ; and in

this case, the judge does not go against his conscience, because by oath he is bound to go according to law. He, indeed, goes against his private knowledge; but that does not give law to a judge, whose knowledge is to be guided by other instruments. (2.) And it is here as in case of execution of sentences, which is another ministry of law. "Ordinarius teneatur obsequi delegato, etsi sciat sententiam illam injustam, exequi nihilominus tenetur eandem," said Innocentius III.^c The executioner is not to refuse his office, though he know the judge to have condemned an innocent: for else he might be his judge's judge, and that not for himself alone, but also for the public interest. For if an executioner, upon his persuasion that the judge did proceed unjustly against the life of an innocent, shall refuse to put him to death, he judges the sentence of the judge over again, and declares publicly against it, and denies to the commonwealth the effect of his duty: so does a judge, if he acquits him whom the law condemns, upon the account of his private knowledge. (3.) It is like speaking oracles against public authority from a private spirit. (4.) Which thing, if it were permitted, the whole order and frame of judicatures would be altered, and a door opened for a private and an arbitrary proceeding: and the judge, if he were not just, might defame all witnesses, and acquit any criminal, and transfer the fault to an innocent and unsuspected, and so really do that which he but pretends to avoid. (5.) And the case would be the same, if he were a man confident and opinionative. For he might seem to himself to be as sure of his own reason, as of his own sense; and his conscience might be as effectively determined by his argument as by his eyes; and then by the same reason he might think himself bound to judge against the sentence of the law, according to his own persuasion, as to judge against the forms of law, and proceedings of the court according to his own sense. (6.) And therefore not only in civil but in the ecclesiastical courts we find it practised otherwise: and a priest may not refuse to communicate him, whom he knows to have been absolved upon a false allegation, and unworthily; but must administer sacraments to him according to the public voice, not to his own private notice: for it would be intolerable, if that which is just in public, should be rescinded by a private

^c Cap. Pastoralis. sect. Quia Verò de Officio et Potestate Judicis Delegati.

pretence, whether materially just or no ; not only because there are other measures of the public and private, and that to have that overborne by this would destroy all government ; but because if this private pretence be admitted, it may as well be falsely as truly pretended : and therefore, since real justice by this means cannot be secured, and that unless it were, nothing could make amends for the public disorder, it follows that the public order must be kept, and the private notice laid aside. (7.) For the judge lays aside the affections of a man, when he goes to the seat of judgment ; and he lays aside his own reason, and submits to the reason of the law,— and his own will, relinquishing that to satisfy the law ; and therefore he must bring nothing of a private man with him, but his own abilities fitted for the public. (8.) And let no man in this case pretend to zeal for truth and righteousness ; for since in judicatures, legal or seeming truth is all that can be secured, and with this the laws are satisfied, we are sure we may proceed upon the testimony of concurring witnesses, because they do speak legal truth ; and that being a proportionable conduct to legal persons, is a perfect rule for the conscience of a judge ; according to the words of our blessed Saviour quoted out of Moses' law, “ It is written in your law, the testimony of two men is true^d,” that is, it is to be accepted as if it were true, and proceedings are to be accordingly. In pursuance and verification of this, are those words of St. Ambrose^e : “ Bonus judex nihil ex arbitrio suo facit, et domesticæ proposito voluntatis, sed juxta leges et jura pronunciat, scitis juris obtemperat, non indulget propriæ voluntati, nihil paratum et meditatum domo desert, sed sicut audit, ita judicat.” “ A good judge does nothing of his will, or the purpose of his private choice, but pronounces according to laws and public right, he obeys the sanctions of the law, giving no way to his own will, he brings nothing from home prepared and deliberated, but as he hears so he judges.” This testimony is of the more value, because St. Ambrose had been a judge and a ruler himself in civil affairs, and therefore spake according to the sense of those excellent laws, which almost all the civil world have since admitted. (9.) And the thing is confessed in the parallel cases : for a judge may not proceed upon the evidence of an instrument

^d John, viii.^e In Psal. cxviii.

which he hath privately perused, if it be not produced in court, though he by that could be enabled to do justice to the oppressed party ; for he does not know it as a judge, but as a private man ; and though that be a distinction without a real difference of subject, yet in effect it means, that the laws do not permit a judge to take notice of any private information, which might prove an inlet to all manner of violence and robbery. (10.) And therefore if a priest hearing the confession of Caius, understands that Titius was the complice of Caius's crime, he may not refuse to absolve Titius, though he do not confess the fact in which he took part with Caius ; because he is to proceed by the method of that court where he sits judge. For private and personal notice is not sufficient. (11.) And if I do privately know that my neighbour is excommunicate, I am not bound to refuse him my society, till I know it legally ; and therefore much less may a judge do a public act upon private notice, when we may not do even a private act referring to law without a public notice. (12.) And all this is confirmed by the authority of Ulpian⁴ : " Veritas rerum erroribus gestarum non vitiatur, et ideo præses provinciæ id sequatur, quod convenit eum ex fide eorum quæ probabuntur :" " The truth of things is not prejudiced by errors in matters of fact : and therefore let the president of the province follow that which is fitting for him, proceeding by the faith of those things which shall be proved." (13.) For since no man must judge by his own private authority, he must not judge by his own private knowledge. (14.) And to what purpose shall he call in witnesses, to give him public information, if when they have done so, he by his private may reject the public ?

8. But if after all this you inquire, ' What shall become of the judge as a man, and what of his private conscience ?' these men answer,—that the judge must use what ingenious and fair artifices he can to save the innocent, or to do justice according to truth, but yet so as he may not prevaricate the duty of judge : he may use the prudence of a friend and a private man : let him, by various and witty interrogatories, in which he may be helped by the advantage of his private knowing the secret, make ways to entrap the false witnesses, as Daniel did to the two elders in the case of Susanna : or

⁴ L. Illicita. sect. Veritas.

let him refer the cause to the supreme power, or resign his office, or make a deputation to another, or reprieve the injured man, or leave a private way for him to escape, or use his power of interpretation, or find some way to elude the unjust hand of justice, which in this case does him wrong by doing right. But if none of these ways, nor any other like them, can preserve the innocent man, or the judge's private conscience, he must do justice according to law, standing upright as a public person, but not stooping to particulars, or twisting himself by his private notices.

9. This is the sum of what is or can be said in this opinion; and though they speak probably and well, yet I answer otherwise, and I suppose, for reasons very considerable. Therefore,

To the question, I answer, that a judge in this case may not do any public act against his private conscience; he may not condemn an innocent whom he knows to be so, though he be proved criminal by false witnesses. And my reasons are these:

10. (1.) "Innocentem et justum non occides," said God^s; To slay an innocent person is absolutely and indispensably evil. Upon which ground I argue; That which is in its own nature essentially and absolutely evil, may not be done for any good, for any pretence, for any necessity, nor by any command of man. Since therefore in the present case, the man is supposed innocent, he ought not to be delivered to death for any end in the world, nor by any authority, much less for the preservation of the forms of courts, or to prevent a possible evil that may accidentally and by abuse arise; especially since the question here is not matter of prudence or policy, but of justice and conscience: nor yet of the public interest, but of the judge's duty; nor at all, what the laws actually do constitute and appoint, but what the judge may really practise. Now, in all cases, if a man dies, it must be by the merit of the cause, or for some public end. The first is not supposed in this question, because the man is supposed innocent; and if the latter be pretended, it is an open profession of doing evil that good may come of it. And if it be answered, that this is true, if the man did appear to be innocent, but in law he appears otherwise: I reply, that it is true, to the law he does so, but not to the judge; and there-

^s Exod. xiii. 7.

fore, though the law can condemn him, yet she cannot do it by that judge. He must not do it, because it being by an unavoidable defect or error, that the law may do it, and if the law could be rightly informed, she would not, she could not, do it, it follows that the judge who is rightly informed, can no more do it than the law itself, if she had the same information.

11. (2.) To judge according to forms and processes of law, is but of human positive right and constitution; for the law may command a judge to proceed according to his own knowledge, if she will trust him and his knowledge: and in all arbitrary courts it is so; and in the supreme power it is always so, if it be absolute. But not to condemn the innocent, is of divine and eternal right, and therefore cannot be prejudiced by that which only is human. And indeed if we look into the nature and causes of things, we shall find, that the reason why judges are tied to forms and processes of laws, to testimonies and judicial proofs, is, because the judge is supposed not to know the matters brought before him, till they appear in the forms of law. For if a judge did know men's hearts, and the secrets of things and causes,—supposing him to be honest, he were the fittest person in the world to be a judge, and can proceed summarily, and needs no witnesses. But this is the way of the divine judgment, who proceeds upon his own knowledge, though for the declaration of his justice to men, he sometimes seems to use processes, and measures of human inquiry; as in the case of Sodom, and the like. And in proportion, if God should reveal to a judge the truth of every case that lies before him, I think no man doubts, but he might safely proceed to judgment upon that account. This was the case of Daniel and Susanna. For she was convicted and proved guilty by concurrent witnesses; God revealed the truth to Daniel, and he arrested judgment upon that account. Upon examination of the witnesses he finds them disagree in the circumstances; but this was no legal conviction of their falsehood in the main; but it was therefore sufficient, because Daniel came in the manner of a prophet, and knew the truth from God, not by forms of law. Now it matters not, as to the justice of the proceeding, which way the truth be known; for the way of receiving it is but extrinsical to the main question: and as Daniel being made

judge by God, might not have consented to the death of Susanna, though not only the two elders, but ten more, had sworn that they had seen Susanna sin: so neither can a judge, to whom God by some special act of providence in behalf of truth and innocence hath made known the matter, proceed to sentence against that knowledge, which he by divine dispensation hath received.

12. (3.) If a king, or senate, or any supreme power, receive testimony of a matter of fact concerning any of their council, whom they know to be innocent; as if it be legally proved that Sempronius robbed a man, upon the kalends of March, a hundred miles from the place where the king or senate saw him sitting all that day; that they may not deliver him to death appears therefore, because they, being accountable to none but God, must judge by his measures, that is, so as to preserve the innocent, and not by those measures which men's necessity, and imperfection, and weaknesses, have made regularly necessary. But that which is regularly necessary, may irregularly and by accident in some cases be unjust, and in those the supreme power must make some provisions where it can, and it can when it knows the truth of the particular. For since the legislative power can dispense in the administration of its own laws upon particular necessities, or charity upon the affirmation and petition of him that needs it: much more must it dispense with the forms of proceedings in a case of such necessity, and justice, and charity, and that upon their own knowledges. The affirmation of the argument is, that princes and senates may, and must, do this; that it is necessary, and therefore, also just in them to do so. The consequent of the argument is this: That therefore if private judges may not do so, it is because they have no authority to do so, but are compelled by their princes to proceed by forms: and, if this be all, it declares the necessity of such proceedings to be only upon man's authority; and so, though by law he may be bound to do so, yet our inquiry being what he is tied to do in conscience, the law cannot prevail above conscience, the subordinate above the superior,—there being, in this case, a knowledge of the fact, and the law of God for the right.

13. (4.) For the case is this; God says, "Thou shalt not slay the innocent," and the judge does certainly know, that the accused man is truly innocent: the conclusion is, There-

fore this man must not die. Against this, the argument opposed is this: Human authority says, Thou shalt not slay him that is convicted of a fault, whether by true or false witnesses: here are witnesses which do convict him, and I know them to be false: the conclusion is, Therefore this man must die. Which of these two arguments ought to prevail, I think needs not much inquiry.

14. (5.) And what if Titius be accused for killing Regulus, whom the consul at that time hath living in his house, or hath lately sent abroad; would not all the world hoot at him, if he should deliver Titius to the tormentors for killing the man whom the judge knows to be at home, it may be dressing his dinner, or abroad gathering his rents? But if this be so absurd (as it is indeed extremely), it follows that he may use his private knowledge against a false testimony that is public. Or how if he sees the fact done before him in the court? a purse cut, or a stone thrown at his brother-judge, as it happened at Ludlow not many years since? The judge proceeded to sentence upon intuition of the fact, and stayed not for the solemnities of law. Or put case that there be depositions offered on both sides, for and against the innocent, either directly or indirectly. If in this case the judge's private knowledge may determine for either, it follows that his private knowledge can be admitted as the instrument of justice; and if it may, it must: for nothing can hinder him to do it, but because he may not. But that he may, appears in the now alleged instances.

15. (6.) Adrianus puts another case, in which it is also without contradiction evident that private notice is to be preferred before public solemnity, where there is an error in this and none in that. The case I choose to express in this narrative. Viretta, a naughty woman, pretends to be wife to Coloro, an Italian gentleman, and brings a priest and witnesses whom she had suborned, to prove the marriage. The judge gives sentence for Viretta, and commands Coloro to pay the duties of a husband to her, and to use her as a wife. He knows the contrary, and that he is husband to Vittoria Morisini, and therefore pays her all his duty, and neglects the other; and he is bound to it, because no man's error or malice can alter the laws of God, and from paying that duty which he knows is due by the laws of God, he cannot be excused by any formal error arising in the administration of the laws of

man. The same is the judge's case. For if the law commands him to do an act against a known private duty, he is so to follow the duty he knows he owes to God, in preserving the innocent, as Coloro is bound to preserve his duty to his wife, and the judge may no more commit murder than Coloro may commit adultery; but neither of them can be rescued but by their private conscience, therefore they may use that. And there is no escape in this instance, because the subject is as much bound to submit to the sentence of the law, as the judge is to the forms of it; and that which secures one, secures both.

16. (7.) The evils that may be consequent to the strict adherence to the forms and proofs of law against the judge's conscience, may be so great as to be intolerable, and much greater than can be supposed to be consequent to the following a certain unssolemn truth. And there is no man, but put the case so as himself and his party may be involved in ruin by false witness, and he will grant that himself is by all means to be preserved. Put case a whole order of the clergy, of monks, of lawyers, should be accused falsely and oppressed by evil men, as the knights templars were accused, fiercely, and so were the religious in Henry VIII.'s time: if the king had known that the monks, and the Pope had known that the templars had been innocent, no man ought to have persuaded them to condemn the guiltless. For if the king had proceeded against them to confiscation, making use of his advantage gotten by the sin of vile men, the effect had been, that he would rather have gotten money by a lie, than have done justice to the oppressed according to his conscience. And indeed, because it is not to be supposed but all the world would have given sentence for themselves in their own case, it is to be supposed that the contrary opinion is but the sentence of men in prosperity, or of inexperienced scholars, who care not what load they put upon others to verify their own opinion. And what Christian will not condemn Pilate for condemning the holy Jesus, according to the testimonies of his false accusers, and against his own conscience? And let the case be put, that the witnesses had agreed, and proved foul things against the unspotted Lamb of God, and made all clear in forms of law, and that Pilate had known the Lord to be innocent and injured, could the

water in the basin have washed him clean, if he had, against his conscience in compliance with the solemn perjuries, have condemned him who was purer than the angels? In this case the effect had been intolerable, for which no pretence of necessity, or legal formalities, could have made recompense.

17. (8.) A law founded upon presumption binds not in the court of conscience, when the presumption is found to be an error. The law presumes that the heir entering upon an estate, if he makes not an inventory, does it to conceal the goods, and defraud the creditors. But if an heir does so by negligence, or ignorance, or an impertinent fear, or upon ill counsel, or be betrayed to do so; if the creditor knows that the goods are not sufficient, he may not in conscience take the advantage the law gives him, but is bound to do charity and justice by the measures of his private knowledge, and not by the measures of the law to do violence and oppression, which was the thing in question.

18. (9.) To the verification of the sentence of death upon an accused person there are required, 1. A reality of the crime. 2. A power in the judge. 3. And equity in the law. Now if divers men should swear that the judge hath a competent power, nay, though they threaten him with death if he does not, yet he may not exercise any such power, which himself privately knows that he hath not. So also, if he knows the fact does not deserve death, though men swear it, or a higher power declare it, or another competent judge affirm it, yet a judge must not consent to it, if himself knows it to be unjust. And I have read of an excellent prince, who because he did consent to the forms and processes of law made by his senate against the bravest of his subjects, against his own conscience and knowledge, repented of it all the days of his life, and was not pardoned for it till the day of his death; and the first confidence he had of pardon, was upon St. Paul's words, "He that is dead, is justified from sins." But then, since the defect of either of these two makes it unlawful for a judge to proceed according to the forms of law, and ties him to follow his conscience even against allegation and proof, much more must it be so, if there be no reality of fact in the accused party; because in the destitution of this, the laws themselves have no power, and therefore they can give none to a judge their minister. "Justis lex non est po-

sita," "The law was not made for the innocent," but to defend them, and therefore hath no power to destroy them; and then the judge can have none,—and so cannot in that case be tied to proceed according to formalities,—and therefore must proceed according to his conscience, or not at all. For,

19. (10.) If a law were made that a judge should be bound to condemn an innocent person, though he knows him to be so, and to be accused by calumny, and supplanted by perjury, it were an unjust law, as all men (that I know of) grant, and indeed must grant. For it were a law made to encourage perjurors and oppressors, to discourage innocence: a law made against the intention of laws, which is, to defend the right and punish the wrong-doer: it were a law disabling the judge to rescue the oppressed, and a law expressly disowning the cause of the afflicted: and if any judge should undertake his office upon such terms, he should openly profess, that if the case happened, he would do against his conscience. And all laws going the best way they can to find out truth, would never disable a judge to make use of it when he had found it out, and assisted the inquiry of the laws by a fortunate discovery. For the examining of witnesses being but a means to find out truth, cannot possibly be so adhered to, as to be preferred before the end to which it is designed; that were as if a man should rather love to seek than find. Since, therefore, no lawyer ever was, or can be, so unreasonable as to decree that a judge shall not, in such a case, directly relieve the innocent, but proceed to his condemnation, it follows that he can have no obligation to do so, and then the obligation of his conscience can upon no pretence be declined. The law does not intend to oblige the judge in that case, because no law can be made expressly to do so; he, therefore, being free from the law in that case, stands bound to his private conscience, without excuse. Nay, the canon law expressly enjoins that a judge should give sentence according to his own conscience, as appears in "c. l. de Re Judic. in 6. et in Clem. l. sect. Verum de Hæret."

20. (11.) Suppose a judge should suborn false witnesses against an innocent; either he is bound not to proceed according to allegation and proof, but according to his secret conscience, or else he is bound to go on in his crime, and

effect that which he had maliciously designed. For it is not enough that he is bound to disengage the witnesses and take off the subornation : for suppose the persons already appearing will not cease, lest they should be ashamed and ruined, but will take confidence from their crime, and perseverance from their publication, then there is no remedy for the innocent, neither can the judge rescue him from himself, nor give over sinning, unless he proceed by his private certain measures, and not by those which are false and public. For to say he may be sorry for his fault, and yet proceed in it, is to make him a hypocrite : if he confesses that he suborned the witnesses, and yet proceed to condemn the innocent, he is ridiculous, and makes the law put on the face of tyranny and unreasonable violence and oppression. So that either he must go on and sin to the end without remedy, or he must be admitted to proceed by his private conscience, and that in his case would be justice and penitence besides.

21. (12.) Lastly, all laws being intended for the good of the subjects, are bound not only to comply with their ordinary cases by ordinary provisions, but for their accidental needs by the extraordinary. And so we find it, that all laws yield in particulars, when the law is injurious in the special cases : and this is the ground of all chancery, because “summum jus, summa injuria ;” and Solomon advised well, “Noli esse justus nimium,” “Be not over righteous ;” and the justice of God being ἐπιεικεία, gentleness and favour, equity and mercy, ours is best when we follow the best precedent : now since no case is more favourable than the present, the laws are unjust that will not bend and stoop to the miseries of the oppressed ; and therefore the judge having no hindrance, he is tied by a double band to relieve the oppressed innocent, by his direct sentence (where it can be admitted), or by his open declaration, and “quantum in se est,” but at no hand to consent to his condemnation.

22. I conclude, therefore, with that rule of the canon^h law, “ Melius est scandalum nasci quam ut veritas deseratur ;” “ It is better that a scandal should be suffered, and an offence done to the forms and methods of judicial proceedings, than that truth should be betrayed and forsaken ;” and what was said in the prophecy concerning our blessed

^h Cap. penult. de Reg. Jur.

Saviour, “Non secundum auditum aurium arguet,” “He shall not reprove according as he hears,” but according as he knows, is also true of judges in this case: they do judge most perfectly, when, in truth and in defence of the innocent, they follow the pattern of the divine judgment, and not the imperfection of the human, that is, they are to judge by the eyes, not by the ears;

Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus—

That is a sure sentence that can rely upon ocular demonstration; for our eyes are a better guard of innocence than the tongues of sycophants, and our conscience are surer informers than the forms of law; and since no law hath declared against it, the conscience is at perfect liberty; and yet if it were not, we are certain it is better to obey God than men; the conscience is no man’s servant, it is God’s only. Conscience is God’s angel: “Grieve not the angel, lest he smite thee; do nothing against him, lest he forsake thee.”—“Viro bono fixum in omni vita est, traversum unguem à recta conscientia non discedere,” said Cicero¹; “Every good man is perfectly resolved not to depart from his right conscience a hair’s breadth during his whole life.”

23. And now to the pretences which are made on the other side, there will be the less need of a reply, if we consider that they only prove that a judge is tied to observe the forms of judicial process, and to proceed according to allegation and proof, ordinarily and regularly, as supposing that this is the best ordinary way of information, as it is most certainly. But as the law, using the best she hath, would not yet refuse a prophet from heaven, or a miracle to bring truth from her retirements, or her veil, so neither will she refuse any better way that can be offered; but whatever the law would do, yet the question now being concerning the judge, it is certain that the judge in the case now put, hath a surer way of evidence. And therefore as the law, if she had a surer way of evidence, ought not to go against so clear a light, so neither can the judge. And the arguments, only proceeding upon the usual suppositions, conclude that regularly judges must do as usually they can do, that is, proceed according to proof, because they can have no better way,

¹ Ad Atticum, xiii. 20.

but they cannot be drawn to this extraregular and rare contingency. For though most men are brought in upon suspicion or private accusation, yet the Apostle says that ‘ some men’s sins are manifest, going before unto judgment :’ and when this happens, the judge must not go in inquest after what he sees. And the same arguments may as well be urged against all dispensations and remissions, against favour and chancery, and destroy all equity, and all religion, as to destroy all conscience when it is certain and infallible. But I shall say something to the particulars.

24. (1.) It is true that a judge hath a double capacity, and he hath offices proportionable ; some as a man, some as a judge ; that is, he hath some natural and essential obligations, some which are superinduced upon his office. And therefore, I refuse to use this distinction as it is commonly used, and so made more subject to mistake and abuse. In this case the judge is not to be considered as a public man and a private man ; for private is as much superinduced as public, and his other relations are as much to yield to his essential duty, as that of a judge : such as are the relation of a husband, of a father, of a tutor, of a master ; and, amongst these, the more private is often tied to yield to the more public. But therefore in this case the judge is to be considered as a judge and as a man ; and in this case the duties are sometimes disparate, but never contrary ; and when there is a dispute, the superinduced must yield to that which is original ; for whatsoever is his duty as a man, the judge may not prevaricate ; for it is the man that is the judge, in the man that office is subjected, and the office of a judge is bound upon him by the conscience of the man. If the judge had two consciences, and two real persons, then it were to be granted that they were to be served and attended to in their several callings ; but it is not so : they are but two persons in fiction of law, but materially, and to all real events, the same : it is the same conscience ministering to divers duties : and therefore as the judge is always that man, so his conscience is the conscience of that man ; and because as a man he must not go against his conscience,—so when that man is a judge, he must not go against the man’s conscience, for the judge is still that man ruled by that conscience. The essential duty of a man cannot by any superinduced formality

be dispensed with. Now to go according to our conscience and knowledge is the essential rule and duty of a man, which he cannot put off by being a judge. The new office superinduces new obligations, but none contrary, no more than he can cease being a man by being a judge. “*Certe prior anima quam litera, et prior sermo quam liber, et prior sensus quam stylus, et prior homo quam philosophus et poeta*”^k; He is first a man, and then a philosopher, a poet, or a judge; and that which is first, cannot be prejudiced by what is superinduced. And if the judge go against the conscience of the man, pretending to do according to the conscience of the judge, the man shall be damned,—and where the judge shall then appear, any child can tell. If the Bishop of Bayeux, as earl of Kent, will rebel against his prince, the Earl of Kent shall lose his head, though the Bishop of Bayeux may plead his clergy. For in this there is a great mistake. To be a man and to be a judge, are not to be compared as two distinct capacities of equal consideration. To be a bishop and to be a judge are properly such, and have distinct measures; but to be a man is the subject of the two capacities, and cannot be laid aside as either of the other may; and therefore the distinction is vain and sophistical: and if it could be admitted in metaphysics (in which yet it appears to have an error), yet it can never be suffered to pass to real events. This being the ground of all the contrary opinion, and being found false, the superstructure must also fall to the ground. To the special cases this I answer:

25. (2.) An executioner may not refuse to do his office, though the judge hath given an unjust sentence: it is true only when the matter is dubious, or not known, or intolerable. But if the judge commands the hangman to flay a prophet alive, or to crucify Christ, or to strike his king through with a sword, I doubt not but the adversaries themselves will think he is not obliged to obey.—Indeed this ought not easily to be drawn into a rule, lest such people turn it into a pretence.—But if the executioner be sure, and the matter be notorious, and such as cannot deceive him, his hand ought not to be upon an innocent. For as receivers are to thieves, so are executioners to unjust judges. When the fact is notorious, and the injustice evident, then it is such as all men

^k Tertul. lib. de Testim. Animæ.

can see it: and then, as if there were no receivers, there would be no thieves: so if there were no executioners of unjust sentences, the judge would be apt to reverse his sentence.

26. (3). Now whereas it is pretended that if a private notice were admitted against public evidence, it were like a private spirit against a public article, and would open a way to every pretension, it would dissolve the forms of judicatures, and introduce many evils: I answer, that if all this were true, and that for this there could be no remedy, nor yet any recompense in the special cases, it would follow that the law were prudent, if it did refuse to admit such a proceeding, unless she had some reason to trust the judge: but this were nothing to the judge. For the law therefore refuses his testimony, because she hath that which she presumes is better, and because she, not knowing the secret, follows the best way she hath. But the judge knows the secret, and he is not deceived, and he does not make pretences, for the case supposes him to speak according to his conscience; and therefore, although the law in prudence does not believe him, yet he cannot but believe himself, and therefore in duty to God must proceed accordingly, or must not proceed at all.

27. (4.) Neither is this like a private spirit against a public article; because this conscience of the judge does not impose upon the public, who hath power to admit or to refuse his sentence; but it is only for himself: and although his conscience ought not to be the public measure, yet it ought to be his own. I do not doubt but the law may go against the judge's conscience, but the judge himself may not go against his own.

28. (5.) And this we see verified in a matter of a private evidence; for though the judge hath seen it in a chamber, yet he must not judge by it in the court, the law will not suffer him to do so: but yet for himself he may so far make use of it, as to be persuaded in his conscience, and to understand on which side the right stands, and to favour it in all the ways that are permitted him. But the case here being not matter of life and death, the law hath power to dispose of estates, and the conscience of the judge is not obliged to take more care of a man's money or land than himself does, but it can be obliged to take care of men's lives: when the in-

jured person is not able. A man may give away his estate, but he may not give his life away ; and therefore he may lose his estate by such ways, by which he ought not to be permitted to lose his life. Add to this, that a judge having seen an instrument in private which could much clear the cause depending, may not upon that account proceed to sentence, because, it may be, the adverse party can give an answer to it, and make it invalid : whereas in matters of fact, of which the judge is conscious, there is no uncertainty nor fallibility. And, lastly, the suffering party, in the question of money or lands suffers no inconvenience, but what is outweighed to the public by the order of justice and solemnities of law ; and the man that loses to-day for want of producing his evidence, may produce it to-morrow and recover it. But in matter of life and death, nothing can make recompense to the oppressed innocent ; and if he suffers to-day, he cannot plead an error in the indictment to-morrow. For these and many other considerations the case is wholly different. .

29. (6.) By some of these things we may also answer to the instance of a confident and opinionative judge. He may not prefer his private opinion before the sentence of the law, and bring it into open judgment. 1. Because he himself may be deceived in his opinion, and his confidence is no argument that he is not deceived. 2. Because if the sentence and decree of the law be less reasonable, yet the judge without sin may proceed to it, because the more reasonable is not in his choice, and the less reasonable is not absolutely and simply unjust. 3. In matters of prudence and civil government there is no demonstration of reason, but the legislative power may determine for the public interest as is presently apprehended, and may refuse the better counsel, and yet do well enough ; for that which is simply the better, is not in these cases necessary ; and in such things a man's reason ought not to be so confident, as he is of what he sees, or what is matter of faith ; and therefore in these only he is to be guided by his own, in the other he must proceed by the public measures. And as in all things, not demonstratively certain or evident, the executioner is bound to obey the judge ; so is the judge bound to obey the law ; and the presumption will lie for the law against the judge, as it will lie for the judge against the officer. 4. And yet, after all, I do not

doubt but if a judge's conscience were effectively determined against a law, and that he did believe it to be unjust and unlawful, he ought to follow his conscience. As if a judge did believe it to be a sin to put a man to death for stealing thirteen pence halfpenny, he might not condemn such a thief to the gallows. And he is not excused by saying, 'It is not the judge but the law that does amiss.' For if the judge believe the law to be unjust, he makes himself a partner in the injustice by ministering to an unjust law against his conscience. For not only he that commands evil to be done, is guilty, but he that obeys such a command. In this case, either the judge must lay aside his opinion or his office: for his conscience must not be laid aside.

30. (7.) The instance of a priest and an excommunicate person unworthily absolved will no way conclude this question. 1. Because the case is infinitely differing between condemning an innocent, and acquitting the guilty. If any man pretends he is satisfied in conscience that the accused person is criminal, though it cannot be legally proved, yet there is no wrong done, if the accused man be let free; an inconvenience there may be, but the judge must not be permitted to destroy by his private conscience, against or without legal conviction, because the evil may be intolerable if it be permitted, and the injustice may be frequent and insufferable; but if it be denied, there may sometimes happen an inconvenience by permitting a criminal to live, but there can be no injustice done. It may have excuse, and it may have reason, and it may have necessity, that a judge refuse to consent to the death of an innocent; but that he should against his conscience kill him, can have no warrant: and if he be not innocent, there may be reason to let him alone, but none to condemn if he be. Conscience can oblige a judge to an unsolemn absolution, but not to an illegal and unsolemn condemnation. This should have been considered in the Earl of Strafford's case. The law hath power to forgive the criminal, but not to punish the guiltless. And therefore if a man be absolved when he deserved it not, we may suppose him pardoned, and the private priest is not his judge in that case. For to refuse to communicate him is an act of public judicature, and to absolve him is an act of the same power, and therefore must be dispensed by authority, not by usur-

pation, that is, by the public sentence, not by the private minister, since to give the holy communion to such a person is not against any essential duty of a Christian. And therefore if the priest knows him unworthy to communicate, he may separate him so far as he hath power to separate him, that is, by the word of his proper ministry: let him admonish to abstain, represent his insufficiency, threaten him with the danger; but if he will despise all this, the private priest hath no more to do, but to pray and weep for him, and leave him to God and the church. But of this I am to speak more largely in its proper place.

31. (8.) As for the case of a priest hearing confessions, though he find Titius accused by Caius, yet if Titius does not accuse himself, Titius is rather to be believed in his own case than Caius in another man's. Because in this intercourse every man is so concerned to do his duty, that every man is to be believed for himself and against himself, because if he speaks false, himself only is the loser. 2. Caius accusing Titius may, for ought the confessor knows, tell a lie and abuse him, and therefore he cannot pretend knowledge and conscience against Titius; and so this comes not home to the present case, which supposes the judge to know the accused person to be innocent. 3. This argument supposes that a man cannot be absolved unless he enumerate all his sins to the priest; which being in many cases false (as I have shewn otherwhere¹), that which relies upon it can signify nothing.

32. (9.) Last of all, although the judge must lay aside his affections, and his will, and his opinion, when he sits upon the seat of judgment, because these are no good measures of judicature, nor ought to have immediate influence upon the sentence; yet he cannot lay aside his knowledge, and if he lay aside his conscience, he will make but an ill judge. 2. And yet the judge must lay his affections and his will aside never, but when they tempt him to injustice. For a judge must not cease to be merciful when it does not make him unjust; nor need he cease to please himself, so long as he is pleased to do right: these if they do hurt, indeed must be left off, else not; and therefore it cannot with any colour from hence be pretended, that they must lay aside his knowledge, when it is the only way by which he can do good.

¹ Unam Necessarium.

33. (10.) To the authority of St. Ambrose, what I have already said is a sufficient answer. For he speaks of a judge's office regularly and usually, not what he is to do in cases extraordinary, and such is the present question. But he that said, "Sicut audit, ita judicat," would no less have said, "Sicut videt, ita judicat." The seeing of his eyes is as sure a measure as the hearing of his ears.

34. (11.) As for the words of Ulpian I will give no other answer, than that Panormitan and Covaruvias, who urge them and are concerned to make the most of them, do yet confess that they make as much against them as for them, and that they say true, will appear to an ordinary understanding that considers them.

(12.) For although no judge must do acts of a private authority, yet he may as well use his own private knowledge, as he may use the private knowledge of the witnesses; for their knowledge is as private as the judge's till it be brought into open court, and when it is brought thither, it is as public as theirs; but however, to argue from the authority to the knowledge is a plain paralogism: for the prince who armed him with public authority, did not furnish him with a commission of knowledge, but supposed that to be induced by other ways.

(13.) And therefore the judge may, when he hath called witnesses, reject them upon his own certain knowledge, as well as use arts of discovery, or any other collateral ways to secure the innocent. For it may as well be inquired concerning the judge's using his knowledge to the infatuating or discovering the falsehood of the evil witnesses, as to the rejecting them. For if he must absolutely take all for granted which they say, then he must use no arts to invalidate their testimony; but if he may do that, he may do the other, and yet the calling in of witnesses may be to many good purposes, and by the collision of contraries light may arise, and from falsehood also truth may be produced like a fair child from a foul mother. And after all, though this question is not to be determined on either side by authorities, yet because amongst the writers of cases of conscience very many rely much upon the testimony of authors, I think it not amiss to say, that this sense of the question which I defend, was the sentence of many eminent divines and lawyers, particularly

Nicolaus Lyra, Adrianus, Angelus, Navarre, Hostiensis, Calderinus, Panormitan, Martinus, Johannes Arboræus, Oldendorp, Corrasius, Lessius, Bresser, and divers others; and therefore besides the strength of the reasons, I walk the more, confidently by having such good company.

35. To conclude: All those advices of prudence which are given by the adverse party in this affair, as expedients for the judges to proceed by in such cases, I am ready to admit, if they will secure their conscience and the life of the innocent oppressed. But if they will not, but that the judge must give sentence for law or for conscience, the case to me seems very clear. God is greater than our conscience, but our conscience is greater than any thing besides. "Fiat jus et pereat mundus," said St. Austin; "ad hæc, imagine ne naturæ veritas obumbretur, curandum." For images and forms of things, the natural and substantial truth of things may not be lost or prejudiced. Let justice be done whatsoever be the event.

"Accipere personam improbi non est bonum, ut parvertas justum in judicio;" "It is not good to receive the person of a wicked man, thereby to overthrow the righteous in his cause."^m

RULE IX.

The Goodness of an Object is not made by Conscience, but is accepted, declared, and published, by it, and made personally obligatory.

1. No object can have its denomination from the judgment of reason, save only that from thence it may be said to be understood to be good, to be declared, to be consented to: all which supposes the object to be good, or to be so apprehended. Just as an emerald is green before the eye perceives it so: and if the object were not in itself good, then the reason were deceived in consenting to it, and a deceiver in publishing it.

2. This is true in respect of the material, fundamental, and proper goodness of the object; for this it hath independently

^m Prov. xviii. 5.

of the conscience : and the rectitude of the conscience is dependent on this, and consequent to the perception of it. But yet there is a formal, extrinsical, and relative goodness passed upon an object by the conscience, by whose persuasion although an evil object do not become naturally good, yet it becomes personally necessary ; and in the same proportion a good object may become evil.

3. The purpose of this is to remonstrate that we must rather look to the rule than to the present persuasion ; first taking care that our conscience be truly informed, before it be suffered to pass a sentence ; and it is not enough that our conscience tells us thus, unless God hath told the conscience. But yet if the conscience does declare, it engages us, whether it be right or wrong. But this hath in it some variety.

4. (1.) The goodness of an act depends upon the goodness of an object, that is, upon its conformity to a rational nature and the commands of God. For all acts of will and understanding are of themselves indefinite and undetermined till the relation to an object be considered ; but they become good or bad, when they choose or refuse that which is good or bad respectively. To will to do an act of theft is bad, because theft itself is so : to be willing to commit an act of adultery is evil, because all adultery is evil : and on the other side, to be willing to do an act of justice is therefore good, because justice itself is good. And therefore Aristotle defines justice by a habitude or relation to its object. It is “ voluntas dandi suum cuique,” “ a will of giving to every one their due.” And therefore our conscience, because it is to receive its information from the rule by which every action is made good or bad, and its motion from the object, is bound to take in that only which is really and truly good, and without sin or error cannot do otherwise.

5. (2.) Although conscience is bound to proceed this way, yet sometimes the younger takes the elder brother by the heel, or gets out before him, and the act gets before the object by indirect means. For though all things should be thought good because they are good, yet some things are made good because they are thought so ; and the conscience looking upon its object finds error dressed up in the shape of truth, and takes it in, and adopts it into the portion of truth. And though it can never be made really and natu-

rally good, yet by being supposed so by the conscience, it is sometimes accepted so by God.

6. (3.) Although the rule by which good and bad are measured, be in itself perfect, yet it is not always perfectly received by us. Good is proportionable to reason; and, as there is ‘probabiliter verum,’ so there is ‘probabiliter bonum,’ ‘a probable good,’ as well as ‘a probable truth.’ and in the inquest after this, we often shew a trick of humanity, even to be pitifully deceived; and although when it is so, it is an allay of the good it intends, yet it does not wholly destroy it: God, in his goodness, accepting at our hands for good, what we really and innocently suppose to be so. Just like the country fellow that gave a handful of water to his prince; he thought it a fine thing, and so it was accepted. For when the action and the rule are to be made even, if either of them comply and stoop, the equality is made. God indeed requires the service of all our faculties, but calls for no exact measures of any but the will. For the acts of the will are perfect in their kind, but our understanding is imperfect, therefore this may find an excuse, but that never.

7. (4.) Upon this account it is, that though the goodness or badness of an act depends upon the quality of the object regularly and naturally, yet the acts become irregularly or accidentally good or bad by the conscience, because the conscience changes the object; that is, the act is good by the object really good, or so apprehended. The object always changes or constitutes the act, but the conscience changing the object immediately, hath a mediate influence upon the act also, and denominates it to be such as in the event it proves. But then in what degrees, and to what events, this change is made, is of more intricate consideration.

What Changes can be made in moral Actions by the Persuasion and Force of Conscience.

8. (1.) Whatsoever is absolutely and indispensably necessary to be done, and commanded by God expressly, cannot be changed by conscience into an evil, or into that which is unnecessary. Because in such cases where the rule is plain, easy, and fitted to the conscience, all ignorance is voluntary, and spoils the consequent act, but never can legitimate it. And the same reason is for things plainly and expressly for-

bidden, as adultery, murder, sacrilege, and the like; they can never become good by any act of conscience. And therefore in such cases it often happened, that God did declare his judgment to be contrary to the opinion, which men had of themselves and of their actions. Sometimes men live contrary to their profession; ‘they profess’ the worship of God, but deny him in their heartsⁿ, even when they least think they do. Thus the Israelites having constrained Aaron^o to make a golden calf, proclaimed a feast, “To-morrow is a feast unto Jehovah:” but God says of them, “they offered sacrifice to devils and not to God.” And so it was with their children after them, who killed and persecuted the apostles and servants of Jesus, and thought they did God good service. He that falls down before an idol, and thinks to do honour to the Lord;—or robs a temple, and thinks it is for religion,—must stand or fall, not by his own fancy, but by sentence of God, and the rule of his law; “Protestatio contra factum,” is invalid in law. To strike a man’s eye out, and say he did it in sport,—to kill his brother, and think it is well done, because done to prevent his sin, though it may be thought charity by the man,—yet it is murder before God.

9. (2.) Where the rule is obscure, or the application full of variety, or the duty so intricate, that the conscience may inculpably err; there the object can be changed by conscience, and the acts adopted into a good or an evil portion by that influence. He that thinks it unlawful to give money to a poor Turk, hath made it to become unlawful to him, though of itself it seems to be a pious act. So also it is in the uncertain application of a certain proposition. It is certainly unlawful to commit adultery; but if Jacob supposes he lies with Rachel, and she prove to be Leah, his conscience hath not changed the rule, but it hath changed the object and the act; the object becomes his own by adoption, and the act is regular by the integrity of the will. This is that which is affirmed by the Apostle, “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself, but he that thinketh it is unclean, to him it is unclean^p. ” This instance is in a case in which they might easily be mistaken, and innocently abused, by reason of the

ⁿ Tit. i. 16.

^o Deut. xxxii. 17.

^p Rom. xiv. 14. Vide Chrysost. in hunc locum. St. Ambros. ib. Theophil. ib.

prepossession of their minds by Moses's law, and, therefore, in such cases the conscience rules. They who believe themselves married, may mutually demand and pay their duty: but if they be not married, it is fornication or adultery, as it happens. But if conscience says they are married, it is not adultery, but an act of duty; because the same conscience that declares for the marriage, obliges also to pay their duty, as a matter of necessity. Wherever the understanding is wrong, and the will is wholly right, the action is accepted, and the error pardoned.

10. (3.) When the act is materially evil, the conscience adopting it into a good portion, that is, believing it to be good, does not make a perfect change, but leaves an alloy in the several degrees of its persuasion. For it is impossible, that a right conscience and a wrong should have no difference in the effect, especially if there be any thing criminal or faulty in the cause of the error. When two men take up arms in a different cause, as suppose one for his prince, and the other against him; though they be both heartily persuaded, and act according to conscience, yet they do not equally do well or ill. The one shall be accepted, and, it may be, the other pardoned, or excused in various degrees. But this which needs a pardon for one thing, is not, in the whole constitution of it, good for any thing, nor can it be accepted to reward.

4. If the conscience dictate a thing to be necessary, the thing is become necessary, and at no hand to be declined. This was it which St. Paul said, "He that is circumcised, is a debtor of the whole law^q," meaning, that though Christ had broken the yoke of Moses, yet if conscience did take up one end of it, and bound it upon itself, the other end would be dragged after it, and by the act of conscience become necessary. If a man inquires, whether he is bound to say his prayers kneeling, or whether he may do it standing, or lying, or leaning; if his conscience be persuaded that he must do it kneeling, it is necessary he should do so, and he may not do it in his bed; because the conscience is a law-giver, and hath authority over the man, and ought to prevail, when the contrary part is only, that they may do otherwise. For whether this part be true or false, the matter is not so

great, because there is no danger if a man do not make use of a liberty that is just: he can let it alone and do well enough: and therefore to follow the other part which is supposed necessary, must needs be his safest way.

But if the question be, whether it be necessary to keep a holy day, or necessary to let it alone; there if the conscience determine that for necessary to be done, which is necessary to be let alone, the man is indeed bound to follow his conscience, but he cannot escape a sin. For conscience makes no essential alterations in the thing, though it makes personal obligations to the man; and if it be an evil superstition to keep a holy day, it cannot be made lawful, because the conscience mistaking calls it necessary. And if this were otherwise, it were not a pin-matter what a man thought; for his thinking so becomes his law, and every man may do what is right in his own eyes. And therefore God was pleased expressly to declare it, that if a prophet did mislead the people, both he and they should perish; and our blessed Saviour signified the same thing in a parabolical expression, "If the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch." But in this case there is a fault somewhere, and the man smarts under the tyranny, not the empire of his conscience; for conscience can have no proper authority against the law of God. In this case, that which the conscience falsely calls necessary, becomes so relatively and personally (that is, he thinks so, and cannot innocently go in the right way, so long as his guide conducts him in the wrong, and yet cannot innocently follow his guide, because she does abuse him), but in itself, or in the divine acceptation, it only passes for a 'bonum,' something there is in it that is good, and that God may regard; there is a 'præparatio animi,' a willingness to obey.

12. (5.) If the conscience being mistaken in a question, whether an action be good or no, calls that good which is nothing but indifferent; the conscience alters it not, it is still but lawful; but neither necessary nor good, but relatively and collaterally: the person may be pitied and have a gift given him in acknowledgment, but the thing itself cannot expect it. When the lords of the Philistines, that they might deprecate the divine judgments, offered to God golden mice and emerods, the thing itself was not at all

agreeable to the way by which God chose to be worshipped: but their conscience told them it was good, it therefore became lawful to them, but not good in itself; and God, who is the Father of mankind, saw their heart, and that they meant it for good, and he was pleased to take it so. But the conscience, I say, cannot make it good. For to be good or bad is wholly another consideration than to be necessary or not necessary. This distinction is relative to persons, and therefore can be made by conscience in the sense above allowed. But good and bad is an abstract consideration, and relates to the materiality of the object, and is before the act of conscience, not after.

13. (6.) If the conscience being mistaken calls a thing lawful, which is not so in the rule or law of God, there the conscience neither makes an alteration in the thing, nor passes an obligation upon the person. Elenora de Ferrante was married to a Spanish gentleman, who first used her ill, then left her worse. After some years she is courted by Andrea Philippi her countryman, to marry him. She inquires whether she may or no, and is told by some whom she ought not easily to have believed, that she may; and so she does. But being told, by her confessor, of her sin and shame, she pretends that she did it ‘ bono animo,’ her conscience was persuaded she might do it, and therefore hopes to be excused or pardoned. He answers her, that her conscience could not make that lawful which God had forbidden, and therefore she ought not to pretend conscience; for though her conscience did say it was lawful, she was not bound to follow it; because though she must do nothing that is unlawful, yet she is not tied to do every thing that is lawful: and though her conscience can give her a law, yet it cannot give her a privilege. She is bound to do what her conscience says is necessary, though it be deceived: and if she does not, she sins against her conscience, which can never be permitted or excused. But if her conscience tells her only it is lawful so to do; if she does not do the thing which her conscience permits, she offends it not, because, though it allows, yet it does not command it. If therefore she does it, and there be an error in the conscience, the sin is as great as the error, great as the matter itself; as if the fact materially be adultery, it is also morally so, and the

persuasion of the conscience does not excuse it from being such. The reason is plain; for since the conscience when she allows, does not command, if the person chooses that thing which materially is a sin, it is in pursuance of her own desires, not in obedience to her conscience. It is lust more than conscience. But yet whereas she says she hopes for pardon in this case, there is no question but she may. For she sinned as St. Paul did in persecuting the church; he did it ‘ ignorantly,’ and so did she. Here only was the difference; he was nearer to pardon than she; because he thought he was bound to do so, and therefore could not resist his conscience so persuaded: she only thought she might do it, and therefore might have chosen. The conscience hath power in obligations and necessities, but not so much, nor in permissions.



END OF THE ELEVENTH VOLUME.

